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BHARATA MANISHA

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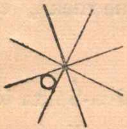
R. N. Mukerji

Bindu and Tantric Iconography

I

Bindu means a point, and in Indian Philosophy and Religion, it primarily stands for the ultimate spiritual point, which is not in any particular place or time, because it is beyond them. In fact, that is precisely why it is called a point or *bindu*. Extension has no meaning except in terms of space and time. Hence that which is beyond both of them must be taken as non-extended, and thus as a point, a spiritual point.[1]

The matter can be easily explained with the help of the *Sāṁkhya-Yoga* systems. In them both *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are beyond space and time. In fact space and macrocosmic time are unreal, mental constructs according to both, in *Yoga* system moments (*Kṣaṇa*) are admitted as real, but not in *Sāmkhya*. In Saṁkhya time is the first product of *Prākṛti* and *ākāśa* is a very late product out of sound *tanmātra*.[2] K. C. Bhattacharya, however, thinks that even in Sāṁkhya system time is implicit in *sajātīya-pariṇāma* of *Prakṛti* and space in diversity of *guṇas*.[3] While there might be some force in his argument for implicit time, we are not convinced about implicit space. In a sense, of course, the whole world is implicit in *Prakṛti*. But, then, the world, together with space and time, are in the *bindu*, and not *vice-versa*. Thus both *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are *bindus*. How then can we imagine their inter-relation ? It might be fancied thus as a first approximation.



the lines represent *Puruṣas* and their common point (*bindu*) of intersection is *Prakṛti*.

---

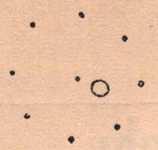
[1] This is well put in Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha, V, 39, 38.

परमाणोस्तवैवाऽन्तरिदं संसारमण्डलम् ।
वटत्वं वटधानायां बभूवाऽस्ति भविष्यति ॥

[2] Throughout ancient Hindu Philosophy there is considerable confusion between *dik* (literally direction) taken for empty space and *ākāśa*, usually and wrongly translated as ether, as the medium of sound.

[3] *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. I (Progressive Publishers, 1956) p. 170, See. 71.

Actually Puruṣas are also points. Hence as a second approximation, we might imagine it thus ;



Prakṛti being common (*sāmānya*) centre, between points representing *Puruṣas.*

We may imagine a revolving theatre at O and spectators at the other points. He who is interested sees the theatre, and he who is not interested, does not. Or we may take the example of a television programme. In a sense, it is being enacted everywhere at the same time (roughly speaking), but we can look into it, with a set, or not, according to our interests.

Here there is a further problem of detail. According to Sāṁkhya satkārya*vadā* all effects are implicit in the material cause, and ultimately in *Prakṛti.* In that case, we should rather regard the theatrical performance as implicit as in Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* without actual performance of it. But in that case, there would be no real creation, a position rather close to *Advaita Vedānta*.

In actual texts like *Sāṁkhya Sūtra* and Vijñānabhikṣu's commentary on it, the explanation of creation differs from the above. There the creative evolution of *Prakṛti* is explained by the proximity of *Puruṣa*, like a magnet attracting iron, *tatsannidhānādadhiṣṭhatṛtvam maṇivat*. But, we have seen that time and space are not real in Sāṁkhya, and they are products of *Prakṛti*. Then what meaning is there in 'proximity' (*sānnidhya*) ? Since Vijñānabhikṣu also accepts the above views of space and time (SPB, ii, 12) how does he reconcile the two positions, that are clearly inconsistent ? Actually the proximity can be taken as mental interest. Just as something that cannot be recalled might be taken as mentally far off, but what is present in the mind as proximate to it.

But, in case we try to understand the explanation of *Sāṁkhya Sūtra*, what can proximity of two points (bindu) beyond space and time mean, except their merger into a third point ?

A consideration on the above lines, in the context of Śaiva-Śākta ideas, led to the doctrine of three points or *bindus*. Now, with these preliminaries, we can proceed to consider the treatment of the subject in *Kāmakalāvilāsa.*

सितशोणबिन्दुयुगलं विविक्तशिवशक्तिसंकुचत्प्रसरम्
वागर्थसृष्टिहेतुः परस्परानुप्रविष्टविस्पष्टम् ।
बिन्दुरहंकारात्मा रविरेतन्मिथुनसमरसाकारः
कामः कमनीयतया कला च दहनेन्दुविग्रहौ बिन्दू ॥ ६. ७.

Two *bindus*, white and red, of the nature of Śiva and Śakti, in indissoluble union, are contracting and expanding (in vibration). They are the cause of two fold creation in terms of words and their meanings (*artha*-objects denoted by words) that enter each other and separate again.—6.

Unlike *Sāṁkhya Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti,* here Śiva and Śakti are indissolubly one, as in Ardhanārīśvara. Still there is a self-projected duality, without which the basic vibration or stir (*kṣobha*) would not be produced and so creation could not proceed. This basic vibration (*spanda*) has been indicated as of the nature of contraction and expansion, union and separation. Taking the case of the solar orb, for instance, it is a product of gravitational attraction that would lead to contraction to a point, and radiation pressure that tends to expand, disperse and scatter the whole thing. It is mentioned that words approach and again separate from objects. It is to be explained thus: in their particularity words approach objects and in their generality they separate from individual objects.[1] Correspondingly Śiva (called *Parāvāk*) and Śakti approach each other in the ultimate unitary consciousness, but appear as separate in knowledge of diversity. Even in such knowledge, however, the underlying unity remains implicit in the fact that the knower knows the objects of knowledge, the acts of 'knowing' serving as a bridge or union between the unitary *knower* and many *known*. Now 'Knowledge' therefore is an union of Knower and Known, like the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti in Sāṁkhya, where also all 'Knowledge' arises from this union. It is maintained in *Gītā* 13, 26 also that all mundane experience arises from a union of knower and known (*Kṣetra-kṣetrajña*). This 'Knowledge' thus becomes the third *bindu*, as stated in *Kāmakalāvilāsa,* verse 13, *'mātā mānaṁ bhinna meyaṁ bindutrayabījarūpāṇi'*. This 'Knowledge' is actually a *bindu* in its transcendent unitary level (*parā*) where knower and known have not separated. The diversified knowledge (at the *vaikharī* level) is projected from this point beyond. But for this basic unity, knowledge could never bring together the knower and the known.

The verse 6 quoted here strongly reminds of Kālidāsa's opening verse in *Raghuvaṁśa,*

वागर्थाविव संपृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।
जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ।।

The next verse, 7, is to be translated thus :

The bindu (3rd) that is *ahaṁkāra* is a union of the first two bindus into complete homogeneity (*sāmarasya*). It is the Sun. It is called *Kāma* (object of desire) because it is 'desired', and Kalā are the moon and the fire.

---

[1] Refer uthor's artide *Philosophy and Art* in *Ānvīkṣikī*, Vol. V (1972) 113 f.

The commentary of Naṭanānanda on this verse appears laboured, and we must do the job ourselves. *Ahaṁkāra* is the union of the first two bindus into a third one, it is of the nature of reflective self-awareness, *'I am I'*, and therefore unites both knower and known, *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* as they are called. As combining the first letter 'A' of Sanskrit alphabets and its last letter 'Ha', in *'Aham'*, it covers all the letters, and is their source, together with objects corresponding to the words.

The Sun is the product of the union of 'Śiva-Śakti' as cosmic individuation of the solar-system. For it the Moon serves as the reflective surface (wall) and this results is fire (light), that waxes and wanes as digits of the moon. The rhythms of lunar light occupied a central place in Tāntric worship. The waxing and waning of the moon was regarded as surfacing of the Śiva (prakāśa-light) aspect and Śakti (vimarśa) aspect, respectively.[1] Beyond the thirty lunar phases in the month, two more were admitted, one at the end of the bright phase, called full moon without the spots (*śaśa-hare*), and the sixteenth digit in the dark fortnight going beyond the new moon. It is these implicit over-bright and pitch-dark points (*bindus*) that hold the potentiality for the opposites, darkness and light respectively, within them. The brightest and the most beautiful expression of Goddess Śakti is Ṣoḍaśī, having sixteen digits of the moon (viz. beyond the full moon). But Kālī, the darkest form of the Goddess is called both *Ameyā* (as belonging to *Amāvasyā* or new moon) and also Ṣoḍaśī. But she is Ṣoḍaśī (sixteen minus digits) of the dark phase. In this sense the Goddess is said to be of sixteen digits, Ṣoḍaśī Kalā.[2]

The symbolism has further complexity. The first triad 'Śiva-Śakti-Sun' and the second triad, 'Sun-Moon-Fire,' constitute a triangle within a triangle. The latter symbolizes other such triangles also. Sun is also called *ahaṁkāra*. In this respect external objects and passion resulting from them would stand for moon and fire. By becoming more concrete, next, they stand for man, woman and

---

1. दिवारात्रिरूपाः। प्रकाशविमर्शयोः दिवारात्रिमयत्वात्। सा निशा सकललोकमोहिनी वासरः स खलु सर्वबोधकः। Cidvallī 17. Also Sun, Moon, and Fire are associated with day night and twilight.
2. Here both the words *phase* and *digit* are used in the special Indian sense of the fifteenth (sexteenth) part of the Lunar orb.

कूटस्थाया एव षोडश्याः पञ्चदशावयवात्मकपञ्चदशतिथिनिष्ठितपञ्चदशदेवतामयपञ्चदशाक्षरीरूपतामाह।

ऐकैकगुणवृद्धया तु तिथिसङ्ख्यात्वमागता।
विमर्शरूपिणी नित्या षोडशी या प्रकीर्तिता ॥ चिद्वल्ली on 15-17.

कलाकलितरूपाय निष्कलायाऽमृतात्मने।
सदोदिताय पूर्णात्मन् शशिने ते नमो नमः ॥

Yoga-Vāśiṣṭha V, 35,71.

sex. Next, within each person, *'Iḍā*, *Piṅgalā*, and *Suṣumnā*, and finally sperm, ovum, and egg. In *Śrī Yantra* these are represented by several inter-locked triangles.

Of the three *bindus* the first is taken as the apex of a triangle and the others as the base points. The first is regarded as the face, and the other two as breasts. In this form, it is called *Kāma-kalā*. In terms of letters, it is regarded as made up of *anusvāra* (.) and *visarga* (:).[1] The three lines of this triangle are assigned the letters beginning with A, Ka, and Tha. Thus it comes to be called *A-Ka-Tha*, which also means inexpressible as *Parā-vāk*. As *Kāma-kalā* it is in the head, in the region of the centre (*cakra*) of thousand petals. It is the higher form of Śakti, of which the dormant form is Kāminī in Mūlādhāra, the lowest centre. In *Śrī-yantra* it can be easily seen that the innermost inverted triangle with *bindu* in it, is exactly like the *trikoṇa* (triangle) in the basal centre with *Svambhu-liṅga* in it, provided the dot is taken as *liṅga*, as in fact *bindu* is called in verse 14. [Figs. 1, 2]

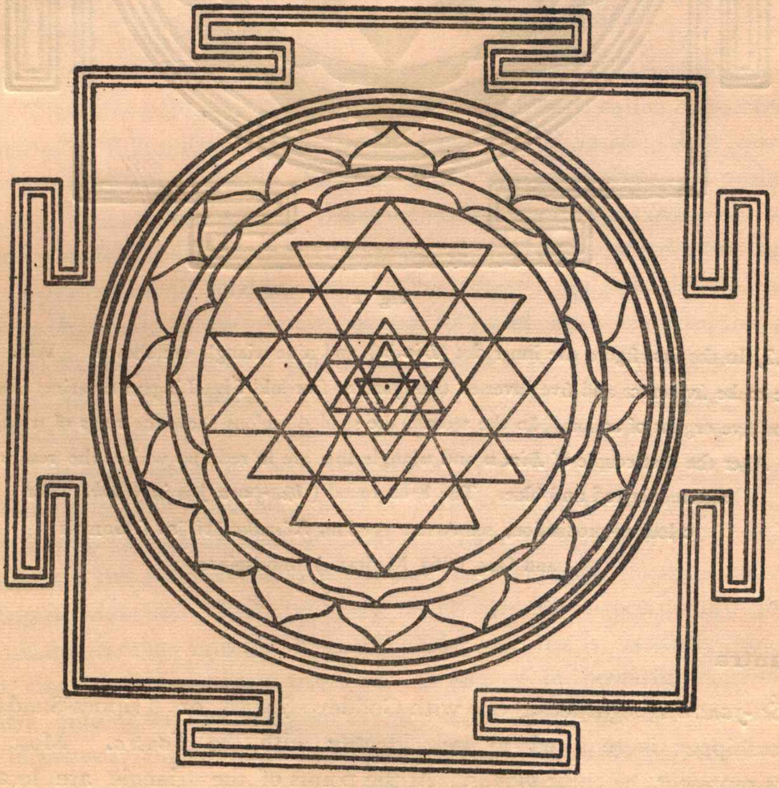


Fig. 1

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[1] *Visarga* is also regarded as half *ha* and genital of Kāmakalā with two dots below the triangle.

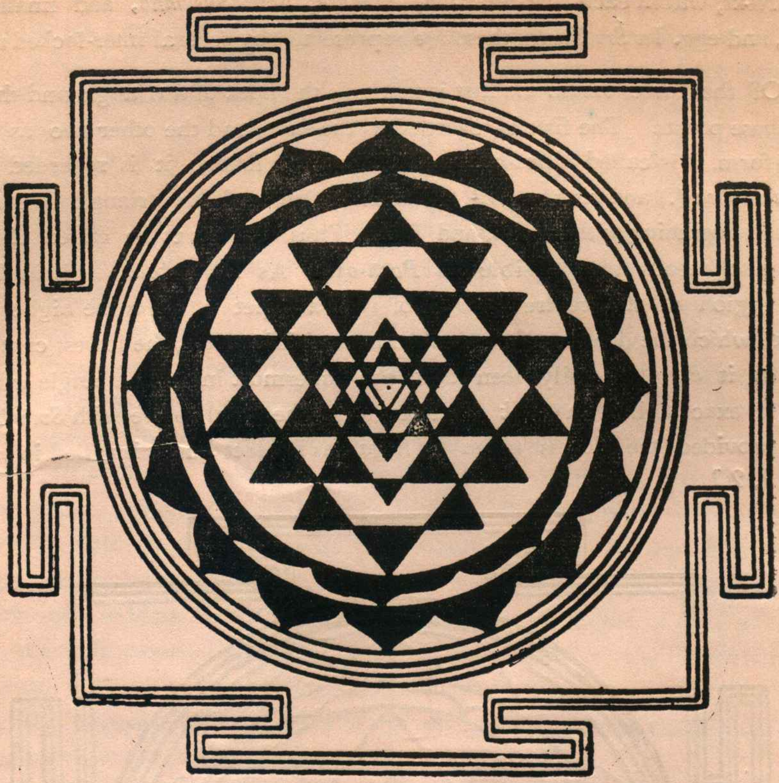

Fig. 2

(Figs 1,2) In the first figure the inner dot (*Bindu*) and nine triangle are shown. With the bindu these make five erect and five inverted triangles, as five fold Śiva-Liṅgam covering five senses and five organs of action. In the second, the shaded regions show the rings of triangles. After the first couple of *Bindu* and triangle that are in red and white, the rest are alternately red and blue. The background (*bhū-pura*) is in yelow. For colour re-production, see Arthur Avalon, *Kāmakalāvilāsa* (Ganesh and Co., 1961 Madras,) frontispiece.

Śrī Yantra

Śrī-yantra is regarded as one with Goddess Ṣoḍaśī or Tripura-Sundarī, and the worshipper is required to seek identity with the *Yantra.* Most directly *Tripura* represent the three *bindus.* At the points of the triangle are located the letters *Ha, La, Kṣa.* From the three *bindus* emanate the three lines. The sixteen vowels beginning with 'A' constitute the first line which represents one form of

Śakti, *Vāmā*. The sixteen letters from 'Ka' constitute the second line *Jyeṣṭhā*, and similarly sixteen letters from 'Tha' constitute the third line *Raudrī*.

The nine triangles in the *Yantra* are laid in two ways, five inverted and four upright. Clearly from the central *bindu* the different triangles sort of ripple out like ripples in water. The triangles are *Kāma-Kalā* as we have seen, and the process of rippling out is called *sphuraṇa* (emanation), *spandana* (vibration), *kṣobhana* (disturbance), or *vilāsa* (dalliance or sport). The Supreme Goddess sort of sportively manifests the world and withdraws it periodically in inseperable union with God Śiva.

Thus the inner bindu serves both as source and sink, as outward process it represents creation and maintenance, and as inward process creation, maintenance, and destruction. These two are concurrent, life and death being implicit in each other. The inverted triangles stand for *yoni* and the erect ones for *liṅga*. In this sense the *Yantra* is only a complex form of Śiva-liṅgam. The nine triangles are associated with nine emanation from Goddess, called *Vāmā*, *Jyeṣṭhā*, *Raudrī*, *Aṁbikā*, *Parāśakti*, *Icchā*, *Jñāna*, *Krśyā* and *Śāntā*.

In the *Yantra* the central bindu is red. It is called *Sarvānandamaya* or fully blissful. Next there is the white inverted triangle, which is called *Sarvasiddhipradā* or granter of all fulfilment. Next eight red triangles called *Sarvarogahara*, or remover of all diseases. Next ten blue triangles called *Sarvarakṣākara* or protecter in every way. Then follow ten red triangles called *Sarvārthasādhaka* or bringing about complete fulfilment. Next come fourteen blue triangles called *Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka* or granter of all good fortune. Then there is an eight-petalled red lotus called *Sarvakṣobhana*, all disturbance, to be followed by a sixteen-petalled blue lotus called *Sarvāśāparipūraka or* granter of all expectations. Finally there is yellow square with four doors called *Trailokyamohana* or that which charms the three worlds, thus completing nine sections in all from the innermost dot to external square. The explanation of these expressions is as follows. The Red Dot is all bliss because it is undifferentiated unity of Śiva-Sakti in *sāmarasya*. The white inverted Triangle grants all fruits because here Śakti as Vāmā (*Vamati*) throws out the world from this *yoni*. Next come the eight red triangles through inter-sections with upright triangles. This probably means that life proceeds through deaths that eliminate decrepits and the diseased. Like this life is restfully protected in the next ring of the ten blue triangles, to engage in powerful activity in the subsequent ring of ten red triangles to attain all ends, leading to resulting good fortune in the next stage of fourteen blue triangles. After a further stir in the red lotus, there is another phase of restful fulfilment of hopes in the blue lotus. This sixteen petalled blue lotus in Ṣoḍaśī Kālī, the dark beauty, from which the bright beauty Ṣoḍaśī Tripurāsundarī streams out as yellow moonlight from blue heaven, to pervade the four quarters. *Kāma-kalā* also is perhaps best understood as the crest of a wave, the three powers, *Vāmā*, *Jyeṣṭhā* and *Raudrī* being taken as its formative, maxima, and subsiding stages.

The explanation of these regions of the *Yantra*, given above, differs in details from those given in a text like *Kāma-kalā-vilāsa* or its commentary *Cidvallī*.

According to this text the 6 rings from eight triangles of *Sarvarogahara* are given in terms of letters and also of the development of Goddess's cosmic body. In terms of letters the first four rings contain Sanskrit consonants from *Sa* to *Ka* in that order, and fourteen vowels beginning with A. These represent the stages *Paśyantī* and *Madhyamā* of articulation of the letters, which become fully articulate (*Vaikarī*) in the last two rings, consonants in the eight-petalled red lotus, and vowels in the sixteen-petalled blue lotus. In these centres are also manifested the powers corresponding to the letters. As development of the cosmic body of the Goddess, who abides at the central Bindu as Tripura-Sundarī Ṣoḍaśī, in the first ring of eight triangle are the powers corresponding to Devi's eight-fold subtle body, in the next two rings reside the powers of the objects of her organs of sense and action, and in the next ring of fourteen triangles abide the powers of her mind and senses. In the first lotus are powers of *Avyakta*, *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra*, and *Tanmātra*, and in the second lotus powers corresponding to elements (*Bhūtas*), the senses, and mind. For details about the three surrounding circles and square back ground (*Bhū-pura*), the interested reader is referred to the text.

Śrī Yantra is the heart of Tāntric worship. In fact it could be said that he who has correctly understood this *Yantra* has understood the *Tantras*. And Tāntric iconography, that influenced non-tāntric icons also in India, is very closely related to this *Yantra*, and *Śrī Yantra* is expression of the *Bindu* the result of a vibration that starts in it.

[to be continued.........]

Chitta R. Goswami

Neo-Hinduism : An Ethnocentric Religion Attains Universalism

Hinduism that has recreated itself in modern time in response to Western criticism is called Neo-Hinduism.

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions of the world. Its variety is amazing. It contains elements of primitivism as well as most sublime aspects of religious aspiration. The continuity of its life and growth is very remarkable. But on the other hand all through its long history it has remained confined, with very minor exceptions, within the bounds of the Indian sub-continent. Though its conception of space is unlimited Hinduism has been peculiarly associated with the geography of India—its rivers, mountains, caves, sea-shores and so on. The most inseparable element is of course the social system with a hierarchy of caste based, for the greater part of its history, on heredity. People from different racial stocks from within and outside India had to find a niche in this caste hierarchy to be able to participate in the Hindu faith. As a result of this caste Hinduism could not thrive outside India. Indian culture has of course, penetrated into greater Asia, to the North, South and East of India, but through the instrumentality of Buddhism, an off-shoot of Hinduism that rejected the caste.

Hinduism became conscious of its limitations for the first time when it failed to absorb the Muslim invaders who came with the zeal of a virile aggressive and altogether different kind of religion. This self-consciousness led only to a defensive strategy and further self-restriction. This is how it managed to survive with a marginal loss of its adherents to the religion of the Muslim conquerors.

The second great attack came during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the establishment of the British rule in India. At this period Hinduism was at its lowest ebb. It is almost a miracle how it could survive the dual attack of Christianity and Renascent European thought and culture. Surprisingly it has not only survived but has strengthened itself enormously, through a process of transformation, so much so that it now claims to be the most universal of all religions and best suited to this age of reason and technology. In this paper we shall briefly describe the steps through which this was achieved, and dwell at length on the universalism of Neo-Hinduism as opposed to its early career.

The first response on the part of Hinduism to the dual attack referred to above was a series of reform movements, most notable of them are *Brahma Samaj* and *Arya Samaj*. One started in Bengal where the attack was most severe, and the other started a little later in West India. Brahma *Samaj* was more apologetic, and it absorbed a good deal of Christian ideas as compared with *Arya Samaj*. Both, however, condemned image-worship, caste and many other irrational customs, and came out with a kind of ethical monotheism, These movements were the first genuine attempts at self-understanding, self-correction, and self-opening to the forces of rationalism and humanism. But these early attempts were made under the overpowering influence of the new forces coming from the West. Consequently, they suffer from a lack of genuine self-confidence, and as such inadequate self-understanding; a spirit of apology dogs them overly. In such a situation inconsistency is quite natural. For example, the monotheism they advocated was not the Christian monotheism since they did not give up pantheistic ideas.

In the second phase of the Hindu response (during the last decades of the 19th century) the change in attitude is conspicuous. The great reformer Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-90) who worked so hard for the abolition of polygamy and childmarriage, for legalisation of widow-marriage and dissemination of education, among the girls in particular, did not feel it necessary to align himself with any of the Hindu Protestant movements noted above. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), the greatest man of letters in India of the nineteenth century, presented a model of religious nationalism in his great novel Ananda Math without ever raising the question of the validity of image-worship. In fact he committed a great act of 'idolatry' by extolling the motherland as a great deity. Most of all Ramakrishna (1836-86), a great spiritual genius, attained highest enlightenment by worshipping the Divine in the image of a terrible goddess, *Kali*, and from the vantage point of Hindu mysticism verified and recognised the underlying truth of all major religions.

These activities had a salutery effect on the national mind. Self-confidence of the modern-educated Hindu was thoroughly restored. Conversion to Christianity or joining the camp of the Protestant Hindus ceased virtually.

Next came a phase in the history of Neo-Hinduism toward the turn of the last century and the early years of the present that may be characterised as a search for universalism. The representative figures of this phase are Vivekananda (1863-1901), Tagore (1861-1941), Gandhi (1869-1948), and Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). They came in slightly different ways to the conclusion that the essence of Hinduism is not in any way conditioned by ethnic, social or local factors. The essence of Hinduism is spirituality which is a prerogative of every man and woman. They even came to believe firmly that it was the great mission of India to develop spirituality to its utmost and offer it to the rest of mankind for the general well-being of humanity.

For the sake of historical correctness it should, however be mentioned at this point that from the very beginning of the career of Neo-Hinduism we detect this yearning for the universal The writings and activities of Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) testify to that. In fact his *Brahma Sabha* (1828) which later became Brahma Samaj was originally established for the worship of One God by people of all different communities. Dayananda (1824-83), the founder of Arya Samaj who was so militant against certain things, writes :

> I believe in a religion based on universal and all-embracing principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come.[1]

Keshab Sen (1838-84), the fiery leader of Brahma Samaj who was largely responsible for the break up of the unity of the Protestant movement, writes :

> Do not hate, do not exclude others, as the sectarians do, but include and absorb all humanity and all truth.[2]

However, let us come back to the best spokesmen of Hindu universalism. Vivekananda, instructed by the words and examples of his illustrious guru Ramakrishna, made a clear distinction between *Sruti* and *Smṛti* primary and secondary scriptures. Primary scriptures are those that embody the deepest truths about God, man and world, secondary scriptures deal with the social and practical issues designed to subserve the fundamental truths. Social and practical issues pertain to time and space, obviously they are changeable unlike the eternal Truth. It means that if the whole social structure get changed due to the exigency of time and circumstance the eternal Truth, the essence of Hinduism remains unaffected. There is, therefore, no reason to think that Hinduism lives or dies with caste, social and personal laws, and other externalities. Of course Vivekananda was not in favour of denegrating the Hindu social set up. He even argued in favour of caste, but looked at it differently :

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[1] Dayananda, 'The Light of Truth'; the excerpt taken from *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Theodore de Bary, (New York : Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 635.

[2] Keshub K. Sen, 'We Apostles of the New Dispensation'; this excerpt taken from *Sources of Indian Tradition*, p. 627.

> Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving life... Wherever you go there will be caste. But that does not mean that there should be these privileges.[1]

In any case Vivekananda succeeded in extricating the essence of Hinduism from caste and any other social appendages. In fact he advocated a combination of Indian spirituality and Western science and technology as the future pattern of human life. Shortly after this Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhi began to develop their theories of education, society and strategy for the struggle for independence. They have equally emphasized spiritual values, they differ, among other things, as to what extent technology is compatible with higher values; but the issue does no longer hinge on whether technology is Hindu or non-Hindu. The essence of Hinduism is spirituality, and that is the most valued thing.

Following the Upanisadic doctrine of the self and the mystical tradition of India Tagore has developed his spiritual notion of religion. He has elaborated this notion in his *The Religion of Man*. The essence of this religion is the discovery of the inner self and the realisation of its unity with the supreme Self as well as with the essence of all existence. This inner development in consciousness takes a unique form in the case of every individual according to his or her inner and outer situation. Consequently the religion of each individual is his or her own. This is the most sublime interpretation of Hindu spirituality. Vivekananda, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo all agree to this. In fact it is perfectly in line with the Hindu tradition. Hinduism is not a monolithic thing; it contains a world of experience and a myriad lines of approach to the highest truth. It does never forget the wonderful diversity of the world and the human nature. Rig-Veda says,

> *ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*. I. 164.

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[1] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, (Calcutta : Advaita Ashram, 9th ed. 1964), p. 245.

Truth is One, sages speak of it differently.

The Bhagavad Gita says :

> *ye yatha mam prapadyante tanstathaivā bhajamyaham* IV. 11

As men approach me, so I accept them to my love. Vivekananda was in favour of each person having his or her own religion. His guru averred that all the different religions are so many ways to the same Divine. Gandhi writes :

> Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal ? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals.[1]

However, Gandhi knew that he could say this only from the vantage point of Hinduism. The Hindu conception of God, man, and salvation is the broadest possible. So he writes :

> My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be the best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism.[2]

The universalism of Neo-Hinduism has found its best exponent in Sri Aurobindo. In the first decade of the present century while he was a leader of the freedom movement he used the term *Sanatana Dharma* (eternal religion) for Hinduism and wrote thus :

> That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal...A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose.[3]

Later in his *magnum opus, The Life Divine,* Sri Aurobindo came out with a grand synthesis of the different conceptions of Reality--God, man and the world. It is a gigantic intellectual feat achieved through his many-sided experience of the Real. And to reach the Real he has developed a comprehensive path known as Integral Yoga. In his writings Hinduism has transcended itself. It is no longer necessary to call oneself a Hindu for pursuing this path. Any body in any country may start to traverse this path from where he or she is situated. Let me quote three sentences from the first chapter of his *The Synthesis of Yoga* :

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[1] *All Men are Brothers : Life and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own words.* ed. K. Kripalani, (UNESCO : Columbia University Press, 1965), P. 59.

[2] *Sources of Indian Tradition,* ed. Theodore de Bary, P. 824.

[3] *Speeches,* 1969 reprint, (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Ashram), P. 57.

> All Shastra [Scripture] is the outcome of past experience and a help to future experience.
>
> His [practitioner of Integral Yoga] yoga may be governed for a long time by one Scripture or by several successively. [of different religions] An integral and synthetic yoga needs especially not to be bound by any written or traditional Shastra.[1]

This is the apex of Hindu catholicity. Man's salvation or attainment of fulfilment does not depend on his or her carrying a label. It depends on one's inner growth and development. Fulfilled personalities are to be found in every major religious tradition. The discipline one should follow in different stages of one's growth would depend on the peculiar endowment and situation of the individual.

Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are said to be universal religions. They are universal only in certain special senses, namely, anybody may embrace any of them, but none of them would say that there could be salvation outside of itself. Hinduism would not restrict human evolution to the adherence of any creed or discipline. Even an atheist is entitled to self-development, as Gandhi puts it : "God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist.[2]"

Another sense of unversalism is that everybody has to accept one unique way for salvation. For instance, according to orthodox Christianity there is no salvation except through Jesus. Obviously Neo-Hinduism does not go for this kind of universalism. Modern Hindu universalism simply claims this : Hinduism is no longer the monopoly of the Indians, its door is wide open, the essence of Hinduism is for everybody whoever cares to partake of it.

This openness may sound a little strange. But it is certainly not bizzare. It dose not mean that Hinduism does not have a character, or that it does not stand for something; only its spirit and capacity has been broadened to the utmost limit. The position has been expressed by a learned disciple of Sri Aurobindo beautifully :

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[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, (New York : The Sri Aurobindo Library, Inc., 1950), pp. 4-6

[2] *All Men are Brothers*, ed. K. Kripalani, p. 58.

> Without the least violation of its own character it [Hinduism] can take the essence of the religion of Buddha to its bosom, even as it can take that of Christianity or Mohammedanism. Each of them can be a note in the complex harmony of its heavenward cry. But neither Buddhism nor Christianity nor Mohammedanism can take Hinduism into itself.[1]

Another speciality of Neo-Hindu universalism is that anybody can take to Hindu discipline with or without formal acceptance of Hindu doctrines or the orthodox way of Hindu life. It is well-known how in modern time Hindu spirituality is making sense to people of different backgrounds and nationalities. As an illustration of its universalism mention may be made of the international community that has grown round the spiritual personality of Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry in the southern part of India. As an extension of this community a new international township--Auroville-has been inaugurated in 1968. In these communities people from scores of different nationalities are pursuing individual self-development in his or her own unique way. Community and individuality are not in conflict there.

Neo-Hinduism seems to have a strong appeal to the modern mind. Modern mind is sceptical. It finds it difficult to accept authority without proper questioning. Most other religions depend heavily on the authority of the 'revealed' scripture. Modern scholarship has pretty well revealed the process of socalled revelation, as Paul Tillich admits :

> There is no sacred language which has fallen from a supernatural heaven and been put between the covers of a book.[2]

Gandhi writes :

> My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to aceept every word and every verse as divinely inspired ... I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense.[3]

Only a leader of an unorganised religion like Hinduism can express himself like this, and this is the spirit of modernism.

The emphasis that Neo-Hinduism lays on personal growth and experience has also an appeal to the modern mind. In this age of existentialism people care more for experience than creeds and second-hand knowledge.

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9. K. D. Sethna, *The Indian Spirit and the World's Future* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobiond Ashram, 1953), p. 117.
2. *Theology and Culture*, (New York : Oxford University Prass, 1959), p. 47.
3. *All Men are Brothers*, p. 61.

Neo-Hinduism probes deep into the human psyche and helps the individual perceive the deeper issues involved in human freedom. Freedom in this age of technology is the most serious concern of every discerning man. What an average man takes for his ideas his opinions and his preferences are in fact the result of his social conditioning. Hindu discipline of probing into one's self unravels this readily. Of course some modern schools of psychology are also coming close to this approach; and this testifies to the scientific character of Hindu spiritual discipline.

Another speciality of Neo-Hinduism is its direct bearing on international intercultural understanding. It has left ethno-centricity far behind. It is eloquent of its recognition of greatness and worth in other cultures and races. It does not claim to have achieved any synthesis of the great religions, infact it maintains that synthesis is not possible intellectually, and an intellectual synthsis does not have a stupendous value either. It points to a state of liberation---an utter liberation of the mind from all sense of binding identity with particular race, language, nationality, formal religion and so on. Such a mind is ready for the Truth; doctrines and dogmas have no need for it.

At this point several questions may be asked. How much of this spirit of catholicity and high principle of freedom of the mind have been practised in India, the land of the Hindus ? How many of the Indians do subscribe to this standpoint, the majority being illiterate ?

It may be said in answer that the atrocities committed in the neme of casts and other prejudices in traditional India is well-known. But Neo-Hinduism from its inception has opposed all these. Mainly because of its stand significant changes have come across in Indian society. And the principle of giving extra privileges to the depressed communities incorporated in the Indian constitution is also a direct outcome of the Neo-Hindu stand. One interesting thing that deserves mention in this connection is that each Neo-Hindu leader has contributed something to the elevation of the status of the women in modern Hindu society.

As for the number of people pursuin Neo-Hindu principles, it is difficult to provide any statistics. The picture is changing everyday. If not in anything else, it is in the sphere of dissemination of modern religious ideas India appears to be a very dynamic country indeed. A sociological process, called by Anthropologists 'Sanskritization', is particularly responsible for this. Knowledge of, and association with, Neo-Hindu leaders and institutions is a sure means of gaining prestige and recognition in the society. However, it would be unrealistic to claim that vast majority of Hindus live up to the principles of Noe-Hinduism. In fact it is not necessary at all. Indians may well practice all kinds of rituals and modes of worship available to the *locales* of their community and yet may attain the highest goal. What Neo-Hindu leaders have done is to relatively free the essence of Hinduism from these local associations and provide a rational discipline that would be approachable by non-Indians as well as meet the needs of the increasingly modernised urban population of India.

Another question that may be raised is that the four spokesmen of Neo-Hinduism--Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo—have been shown seemingly of one mind. Do they not differ greatly in many respects ? Sure they do. Only our concern in this paper has been an issue in which they agree remarkably. Of course even in this agreement there are differences. The differences may perhaps best be indicated in showing the relationship of each of them to Orthodox Hinduism.

Vivekananda is normally considered to be closest to orthodoxy. In fact he is a man of multiple voices. His preaching in the West is remarkably different from his exhortations in India, and his discourse with the close associates reveals another facet of his mind. The position of Gandhi too is rather ambiguous. In some respects he was a radical rationaliser, as some of the quotes in this paper would show, on the other hand his zeal for *Brahmacarya*, vegetarianism, cow-protection and his consistent use of the symbolism of *yajna* (sacrifice,) like *Sutra-yajna*, among other things, testify to his moorings in orthodoxy. Tagore is the only figure coming from a formal protestant background--Brahma Samaj. But the Brahma Samaj he was associated with was least protestant and he cut up his formal association even with that.[12] Tagore's was really a very great mind not to be tied permanently to anything local and limited. As a poet he had access to the myths, legends and nuances of the indigenous tradition, and for the depth of his vision he could get to the profoundest message of this tradition and come out with the declaration *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the whole world is my home). Interestingly the opening verse of a sonnet by Sri Aurobindo runs like this : "I contain the whole world in my soul's embrace." Sri Aurobindo has combined in his sublime vision profoundest insights of Hinduism with those of the West. In his conception of multi-dimensional Reality everything has a place. He has therefore, no conflict with Hindu orthodoxy although, as we have mentioned earlier, in him Hinduism has transcended itself.

Can Neo-Hinduism then be equated with Neo-Orthodoxy ? We cannot address this question here, much of course will depend on the definition of orthodoxy. That Neo-Hinduism has a definite message—universalism of a sublime kind—has been our focal point in this paper.

Herbert Herring

Siddhartha on the Indian Elemnet in Hermann Hesse's Life and Work

(In Commemoration of the great writer's birth centenary)

'I have experienced the war of 1914-18 in such an intensive way, coming close to my personal destruction, that henceforth one thing became absolutely clear to me : that I, for myself, reject and do not support any change of the world by means of force, not even the socialistic one and not the seemingly desirable and justified one. They always beat to death the wrong ones, and even if they were the right ones, – I do not believe at all that anything could be improved and purified by beating to death ... I reject force ··· "

The man who wrote this humanistic confession in the early thirties when after having left his homeland Germany and settled in Switzerland, being accused of not fighting at all costs the Hitler regime was the poet and novelist Hermann Hesse, Nobel Laureate of 1946, whose hundredth birth anniversary will be celebrated on July, 2nd, 1977.

There is more than one reason why this man and his work should be remembered in India, one of them being that he was the grandson of Hermann Gundert, a leading Indologist of the 19th century. His parents had also spent most significant years of their lives in India, and it was this family background together with Hesse's own experiences of India in 1911 that exercised a decisive influence on his world view, finding its literary expression especially in two of his works in prose, the short novel *Siddhartha* (1922) and his opus magnum *The Glass Bead Game* (1943).

But there is yet another reason for Indians to remember Hermann Hesse on this occasion, for there is hardly any other contemporary writer of the West who could claim that his works, at least some of them, had been translated into most of the main Indian languages. *Siddhartha*, for instance, has been translated into Bengali, Gujarathi, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil, and Telugu. I know from my personal experience as head of the German Cultural Institute [Max Mueller Bhavan] Madras from 1969--1975 that quite a number of my Indian friends and students felt much attracted to Hesse's spiritualistic world view and his idea of humanity in which they discovered many an affinity to their Indian way of thought,—not withstanding, of course, certain fundamental differences. It might thus not only be justified but even desirable to investigate Hesse's life and work in their relation to India in some detail, as far as is possible in such a brief essay. In doing so we shall first cast a glance over the life of his mother's father, Dr. Hermann Gundert.

On, 8th July, 1836, Hermann Gundert, a twentytwo year old missionary from Stuttgart in the south west of Germany, arrived at Madras, as a companion to the British missionary Anton Norris Groves who had invited him to teach his sons the classical languages Greek and Hebrew. This invitation met with Gundert's own plans since he had made up his mind as early as 1833 to work as a missionary in India. Having learnt some Bengali and Hindi while still in Germany Gundert took Telugu and Tamil lessons soon after his arrival in the south of India. Requested by Groves to proceed to Tirunelveli, he came under the decisive influence of Karl Rhenius, head of the German mission there. Soon after his return to Madras (31st, March, 1837), Groves posted him at Chittoor where he worked as a preacher, teacher and besides continued his Tamil studies. After Rhenius' death Gundert replaced him at Tirunelveli. But since most of the missionaries there had joined the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church, (under whose supervision Gundert was reluctant to work), he proceeded to Mangalore and became a member of the Basel Missionary Society on 29th, May, 1839. He founded and developed their society in this area, mainly working at Ancharakkandi, Tellicherry, Chirakkal and Calicut. It was during this period that he learnt another Indian language which soon became to him the dearest one, Malayalam. When in 1849 he fell ill with a serious infection of the throat, thus being unable to preach and teach for some years, he fully and vehemently concentrated on philological investigations. In those years he wrote his *Malayalam Grammer*, translated the Bible into Malayalam and commenced his work on the first ever *Malayalam English Dictionary* which, after his return to Germany, was completed and finally published in 1872. It was in particular this dictionary on which his reputation as an Indologist was founded.

After a brief period at Mangalore, he was appointed as Inspector of Schools at Calicut by the British Colonial Administration in 1857. Two years later due to his failing health he had to leave India, never to return. In Germany being in charge of the *Calwer Verlagsverein* (a then much reputed publishing house meant to defend and promote Christian belief against the growing influence of rationalism and atheism) he complains more than once that being mainly occupied with this work he could hardly spare some time for his Malayalam studies. Thus he writes, for instance, in 1863: "There are many who could replace me here but nobody, as far as I know, who could write a dictionary for Malabar such as I have in hand."

The work was completed, as we have said, in 1872, and a second edition was published by the University of Trivandrum in 1972 in commemoration of this pioneering achievement. Hermann Gundert died in 1893 when his grandson Hermann Hesse was only sixteen.

This man obviously has had a great influence on Hermann Hesse's childhood and adolescence. Among the numerous testimonies of this influence there are two which I wish to mention in particular, the first being a letter written by Hesse on 15th, June, 1895, to Dr. E. Kapff who had tried to encourage him to earn his living in Brazil which Hesse finally rejected partly because he knew no Spanish. He writes "Yes, if my grandfather would still be alive ! He was a man ! From him I could have learnt Spanish, he knew more than twenty languages and spoke fourteen, among them Spanish. I regret not having learnt more from him, especially in the field of languages. His hobby was Sanskrit, Kanarese, Arabian and Hebrew--apart from Greek which he mastered perfectly. But for the exception of Russian, he spoke almost all European languages. In conversations with him I have also learnt more of history than in all the schools I have been to." The second testimony from which I want to quote is his autobiographical fairy tale *Kindheit des Zauberers*, written more than forty years later, where he comments on Hermann Gundert thus : "This man, the father of my mother, was embedded in a forest of mysteries, as his face was embedded in a white beard forest, from his eyes there emanated all the anguish of the world and joyful wisdom as well, solitary knowledge and divine lightheartedness . . . From him, the unfathomable, I know also that that mystery which surrounded my mother was derived. The mysterious, primeval . . . "

Hermann Gundert's eldest daughter Marie, later to become Hermann Hesse's mother, was born in India, at Tellicherry, in 1842. She assisted her parents in missionary work and was much liked by the Indians because of her ever polite and helpful attitude towards them. In 1865 she was married to the missionary Charles Isenberg with whom she worked for several years at Kanchi. Isenberg died in 1870, and four years later his widow Marie married again, this time a young missionary from the Balticum (which then belonged to Russia) named Johannes Hesse. He Hermann Hesse's father, was also a remarkable personality in many respects. Hardly nineteen of age, he set sail for India in autumn of 1865, his aim being the Nilgiris region. He lived among the Badagas, studied their customs, learned even their language before joining the preachers' seminary at Mangalore. Within a short time he acquired a fairly good command of Kannada, but because of his poor health he had to leave India after three years, returning to Germany to join his father at the *Calwer Verlagsverein* before he finally took over from him. Johannes Hesse was always occupied with studies in Eastern religion and culture, aiming at finding the common roots of the great religious and philosophical systems of East and West. It was this attitude which made its impact on his son Hermann. But inspite of this fovourable family background there is no report of any significant Indological studies by Hermann Hesse until he was twentyfive. It was shortly before the publication of his first major literary work, the novel *Peter Camenzind* (1904), that he got down to a more elaborate study of eastern religions and systems of thought. It was at that time and stimulated by Schopenhauer's praise of the Indian world view that Hesse read the *Bhagavat Gita* with growing interest, even enthusiasm. He encountered for the first time -- " with beating heart" as he confessed even more than twenty years later -- that idea which was to become the core of his Weltanschauung : the idea of unity and its practical consequence on morality. To quote his own words : " . . . from the Indian point of view, i. e. in the sense of the *Upanishads* and all prebuddhist philosophy, my fellow-man is not only a man like myself, ; he rather is myself, he is identical with myself, because the distinction between him and myself, between I and You, is illusion, maya. This interpretation also envelopes completely the ethical meaning of love for ones neighbour. To the one who has recognised the world as unity, it becomes obvious that it is senseless when the individual members of the totality hurt each other ..." From now onwards Indian and, in his later years with ever increasing importance, Chinese thoughts and ideas formed the metaphysical resources of Hesse's literary work. What wonder that he longed for seeing India with his own eyes. What he, however, actually saw and experienced when his dream came true in 1911, meant a harsh disillusionment of his enthusiasm for India. Putting his experience, to which he had dedicated a whole book in 1913, in one simple sentence : he found relics of a once paradise like human society that had been destroyed and almost extinguished by western rule and civilization. But Hesse was clear-sighted enough to realise that, if the buried coffins of ancient wisdom would be exhumed, they would well suffice to fill this world of ours with new light, intellectual and moral.

Now, instead of randomly selecting from the respectable number of Hesse's works such passages where he shows his being influenced by Indian thought and belief, I shall confine myself to one book only (with occasional references to others) which shows this influence in a most significant way, this book being *Siddhartha*. There may be better books of his, better in the sense of being more poetical; but there are none reflecting Hesse's world view in a more accurate and subtle way. This world view can be expressed as the gradual ascendence from the first individual consciousness of *aham asmi* to the superior and most refined insight as revealed in the statement *aham brahma asmi*, that is to say, the ascendence from the individual's self - identification upto his identification with the supreme spirit.

Siddhartha is the story of a young Brahmin of high standing who, dissatisfied with the religious and social setup of his caste heritage, leaves his home in search of the real goal of life, accompanied by his friend Govinda. He first joins a group of Samanas hoping that they, through their practice of Yoga, could remove his doubts and bring peace to his soul. But he soon realises that he has not made any progress, that he was no nearer to the goal because "What is meditation ? What is abandonment of the body ? What is fasting ? What is the holding of breath ? It is a flight from the self, it is a temporary escape from the torment of self. It is a temporary palliative against the folly of life."

Thus he, more by the persuasion of Govinda than by his own conviction, leaves the Samanas in search of Gotama the Buddha of whose blessed words and deeds the rumour had spread widely, even to the forests : "You have spoken well Govinda, you have remembered well, but you must also remember what else I told you--that I have become distrustful of teachings and learning and that I have little faith in words that come to us from teachers. But . . . I am ready to hear the new teaching, although I believe in my heart that we have already tasted the best fruit of it."

Siddhartha then meets that Buddha, but though he finds that there was no better teachings than those of the illustrious one nor any purer conduct of life, he in the end cannot swear allegiance to the Buddha as Govinda does. Siddhartha's respective dialogue with Gotama belongs to the finest parts of the novel, for its simplicity and beauty of style as well as for its depth of thought.

"You show the world," thus Siddhartha addresses the Buddha, "as a complete, unbroken chain, an eternal chain, linked together by cause and effect. Never has it been presented so clearly never has it been so irrefutably demonstrated. Surely every Brahmin's heart must beat more quickly, when through your teachings he looks at the world, completely coherent, without a loophole, clear as crystal, not dependent on chance, not dependent on the Gods, whether it is good or evil, whether life in itself is pain or pleasure, whether it is uncertain--that it may perhaps be this is not important--but the unity of the world, the coherence of all events, the embracing of the big and the small from the same stream, from the same law of cause, of becoming and dying; this shines clearly from your exhalted teachings, O perfect one. But according to your teachings, this unity and logical consequence of all things is broken in one place. Through a small gap there streams into the world of unity something strange, something new, something that was not there before and that connot be demonstrated and proved: that is your doctrine of rising above the world, of salvation. With this small gap, through this small break, however, the eternal and single world law breaks down again."

The Buddha's answer is that his goal was not to explain the world in terms of knowledge but to show the way to salvation from suffering. To that Siddhartha replies: "The teachings of the enlightened Buddha embrace much, they teach much--how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain; it does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced--he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and *realized* when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way--not to seek another and better doctrine, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone--or die." And thus he takes leave of the Buddha and his friend G vinda also because "Something was no longer in him, something that had accompanied him right through his youth and was part of him: this was the desire to have teachers and to listen to their teachings. He had heft the last teacher he had met, even he, the greatest and wisest teacher, the holiest the Buddha."

What Siddhartha had wanted to learn from the teachings of the Scriptures and the great masters was to find out about the character and true essence of the Self; but he had failed since he was all the time afraid of himself, fleeing from himself: "I was seeking Brahman, Atman, I wished to destroy myself, to get away from myself, in order to find in the unknoun innermost, the nucleus of all things, Atman, Life, the Divine, the Absolute. But by doing so, I lost myself on the way."

Now, at this stage of awakening, as Hesse calls it, Siddhartha suddenly, realizes that "Meaning and reality were not hidden somewhere behind things they were in them, in all of them."

While concentrating on this new awareness and realizing that neither the body nor the senses nor thought not acquired wisdom were the Self, he the first time experiences the beauty of the world as it appears to the one who sees that reality as such cannot be trapped in a net of thoughts. With this entirely new outlook on life he encounters the great courtesan Kamala. From her and the rich merchant Kamaswami he learns the terms of love and business, but again without finding ultimate satisfaction. At heart he stays the lonely, ardent seeker of truth and salvation which he attempts to obtain with the three major capabilities of his, thinking, waiting and fasting. "It seemed to him that he had spent his life in a worthless and senseless manner, he retained nothing vital, nothing in any way precious or worth while. He stood alone, like a shipwrecked man on the shore."

Getting away from Kamala and the world of wealth, luxury and sensuous pleasures, not knowing what else there might be left to attract and satisfy him and nursing the thought to put an end to his life, he enters the forest and comes to the river, the same river where he had met the complacent and wise ferryman Vasudeva years ago, after leaving the Buddha and on his way to the big city. At the climax of his utmost desparation and when about to drown himself, he hears an inward voice uttering nothing but the mysterious word OM, whereupon he is taken back to reality becoming aware of the foolishness of all his previous life. After a deep and purifying sleep he envisages the world as a new man, taking stock of his past : "How strange his life had been, he thought. He had wandered along strange paths. As a boy I was occupied with the gods and sacrifices, as a youth with asceticism, with thinking and meditation. I was in search of Brahman and revered the eternal in Atman. As a young men I was attracted to expiation. I lived in the woods, suffered heat and cold. I learned to fast, I learned to conquer my body. I then discovered, wonder with the teachings of the great Buddha. I felt knowledge and the unity of the world circulated in me like my own blood, but I also felt compelled to leave the Buddha and the great knowledge. I went and learnt the pleasures of love from Kamala and business from Kamaswami. I hoarded money, I squandered money, I acquired a taste for rich food, I learnt to stimulate my senses. I had to spend many years like that in order to lose my intelligence, to lose the power to think, to forget about the unity of things. Is it not true, that slowly and through many deviations I changed from a man into a child ? From a thinker into an ordinary person ? And yet this path has been good and the bird in my breast has not died. But what a path it has been ! I have had to experience so much stupidity, so many vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to become a child again and begin anew. But it was right that it should be so; my eyes and heart acclaim it. I had to experience despair, I had to sink to the greatest mental depths, to thoughts of suicide, in order to experience grace, to hear Om again, to sleep deeply again and to awaken refreshed again. I had to become a fool again in order to find Atman in myself. I had to sin in order to live again. Whiher will my path yet lead me ? This path is stupid, it goes in spirals, perhaps in circles, but whichever way it goes, I will follow it."

Having joined the ferryman as his apprentice, Siddhartha starts learning anew, but this time neither from books nor from teachers or preachers but from the river, the symbol of the totality of nature and eternal creation. Above all he learns from the river how to . listen, "to listen with a still heart, with a waiting, open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgements, without opinions."

He also learns from the river that there is no such thing as time, past and future; that there is presence only. All the voices of the world, of all created beings, he finds in the one voice of the river which, however, is tuned to the simple and yet so majestic word Om, a word that involves and contains all others.

At this enlightened stage and towards the end of his journey through life he meets Kamala again and her son, – his son. He takes over the son from Kamala who dies in the arms of Siddhartha, of a snake bite; but to his disappointment and despair Siddhartha soon realizes that his son--having been brought up in his mother's luxurious world--is not meant to share his father's life in the forest. He even turns against the father with an attitude of hatred and finally steals away from him.

At this point of extreme despair the river and its wise old servant, the ferryman, teach Siddhartha their last and final lesson. Vasudeva by his attitude towards life and world proves that perfection can be attained by any-body, regardless of his social background or even his brains, by anybody who has learnt to listen patiently and open mindedly to the voice of creation which is alive in all things, in the stone as well as in the river, in the herb as well as in man, a voice which time and again narrates the one and only story, the story of the original and ultimate unity of the whole of creation as a universe. Thus Vasudeva, when feeling that his life has come to an end, replies to Siddhartha's question where he was going : "I am going into the woods; I am going into the unity of all things."

As the novel commences with Siddhartha and Govinda growing up together, it ends with a meeting of Siddhartha and Govinda, exchanging for a last time their individual views on life and world. In their life stories we have been confronted with two different attitudes and ways of seeking for perfection, each of them most valuable in itself but Siddhartha's ---as Hesse wants us to realize-infinitely more genuine and rewarding. In the final dialogue between the two friends Siddhartha reveals the essence of what he has learnt through experience and meditation, amounting to the awareness that although all knowledge is communicable, wisdom is not and that the only maxim of human conduct that could truly be called an universal principle is not one of intellectual insight but the principle of an all embracing love." It seems to me, Govinda, that love is the most important thing in the world. It may be important to great thinkers to examine the world, to explain and despise it. But I think it is only important to love the world, not to despise it, not for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect.

Whereas this beautiful and concise novel may call for an interpretation for the majority of readers in the West, pointing out the essentials of Indian spirituality upon which it is based, no such explanation is required to put it across to the average Indian reader. He will easily discover in it the essence of the sacred books of Hinduism, the revelations of the *Vedas*, the profound thoughts of the *Upanishads* and the noble moral principles of the *Gita*. Furthermore, he will recognise in this story of Siddhartha's ardent quest for enlightenment and perfection the deepest ideas of the great Indian sages and thinkers throughout the ages, of the Buddha and Mahavira, Sankara and Ramanuja, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, of Aurobindo and the Mahatma : voices of the same stream of eternal wisdom revealing itself to the one who has learnt to listen patiently; those voices all finally flowing into the sound of the mysterious word Om, designating perfection, the primeval and ultimate unity of being. To those who interpret this view of life and world superficially, it might seem an attitude of escapism. Those, however, being able to grasp its proper and substantial meaning will realize that by means of turning away completely from the world of appearances, one will become aware of one's own individual self as being one with the universal self. Such a purified and enlightened world-view finds its expression not in the intellectual acts of knowledge but in the acts of an all embracing love which reaches out to everything created as being--each in its specific way—a particular incarnation and revelation of the all creative, all-pervading universal principle--by whatever names it may be called.

Now, it would be wrong to hold that Hesse's weltanchauung was decisively dependent on and shaped after Asian ideas. Referring to the novel *Siddhartha* he himself has stated clearly that the story was written to free himself from the bonds of Indian thought. There is no use to deny this statement, but in should be interpreted in the right way. Hesse most probably wanted to say that in the course of time he had come to see that any culture has its own specific character and that the basic characteristics, features and essentials of each culture may well be communicable to other cultures but are surely not transferable without major modifications. That is to say that every culture as well as any individual within the framework of a given cultural setup is bound to tackle the problems of life and world from within that framework.

As Hesse once, in 1926, remarked with reference to the *Tao Te King* Lao Tse should not substitute the *New Testament* for us, but he should demonstrate that similar things have grown under other skies and even in earlier times; and this should confirm our belief that mankind, regardless of its being split up into strange……races and culutres, is nevertheless one and has common possibilities, ideals and aims.'

The Western way of life is just as little applicable automatically to Indians as their cultural values to Westerners. It is this which has been the fatal error of many a colonialist and missionary on the one hand and on the other of the majority of contemporary Indian messengers and their uncritical followers in the West. What is applicable, however, and thus transferable, teachable and learnable, is the serious spiritual endeavour to direct one's gaze through the veils of sensible things towards their common origin. Soon before the outbreak of world war I, Hesse wrote about what we can learn from Asia thus :

> The whole East breathes religion as the West breathes reason and technology. The soul of the Westerner seems primitive…as compared with the… confident religiosity of the Asians. It is clear that no import from the East can help us. But it is equally clear that rescue and duration of European culture is only possible through a rediscovery of the psychical art of living and the psychical common good.

And in a letter dated 28 th, February, 1920, he wrote:

> You say, the search for the I be less important than the finding of the right relation to the others; but these are not two different things. The one who is in search of the real I is at the same time in search of the measure of all life, since this most internal I is the same in all men, it is God, it is the 'aim'. That is why the Brahmin calls every other being 'tat twam asi'-this is you ! He knows that he cannot harm any other being without doing harm to himself , and that egotism is senseless, this brotherhood of mankind, this postulate of a world wide tolerance and human understanding is the theme of another of Hesse's short novels entitled *Robert Aghion* which came out in 1913, i. e. soon after his journey

to India. Here Hesse combines his own experiences of the East with experiences of the members of his family who had spent many years in India.

At first sight the novel can be interpeted as an attack on the arrogance of western colonialists and the dogmatism of the missionaries. But on closer investigation it shows Hesse's genuine sense of tolerance and acceptance of other peoples' right to live according to their indigenous socio--religious traditions.

"Once again it struck the modest young man as monstruously presumptuous that he should have come here as the envoy of a faraway nation to take away these people's faith and impose another upon them. He had always thought that his misgivings would evaporate once he learned the language; but today it became clear to him beyond the shadow of a doubt that this had been a delusion and that the better he understood these brown people, the less right and inclination he would feel to tell them how to live."

In a dream which seems to put his hitherto belief to the test and to open up the way to a universal crede, Robert Aghion imagines a complete and divine merger of Hinduism and Christianity, indicating obviously the author's conviction that the great world religions are but different revelations and manifestations of the one and only principle of the world in whatever shape it may appear, by whatever name it may be called, with whatever rites and other acts of devotion people might worship it.

"Utterly forsaken and disgraced, Aghion stood on the church steps. He closed his eyes and held himself erect; all hope was gone; he waited with the calm of despair for the heathen to stone him. But after a few anguished moments, he felt himself thrust aside by a strong but gentle hand, and when he opened his eyes, he saw the great stone God striding down the steps with dignity, while across the way the divine figures descended in swarms from their places on the facade of the temple. After greeting them one and all, God entered the Hindu temple, where with a kindly gesture He received the homage of the white-clad Brahmins. Meanwhile the heathen gods with their trunks, ringlets, and slit eyes went into the church, where they found everything to their liking. Many of the devout folk followed them, and in the end gods and people were moving in pious procession from church to temple and from temple to church; gong and organ mingled fraternally, and dark, silent Indians offered up lotus blossoms on sober English-Christian altars."

The consequence of this vision can be found in *The Glass Bead Game* (1943) Hesse's major and most mature work wherein he--following the line of the great Educational Novels of world literature, above all of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*—

develops the idea of a humanistic elitarian order of people who consider themselves safeguards and shepherds of a mankind which has lost sight of those spiritual powers (as symbolized in the glass bead game and its sophisticated rules) which alone are capable of saving the world from decline and final fall, and it falls in line with what I have tried to show in , this essay that one of the most significant chapters of this novel is entitled "The Indian Life", based upon the story of Rama.

Whether *Siddhartha, The Glass Bead Game* or any other of Hermann Hesse's works, – the problem at stake is always how the individual man, although being bound to deal with worldly matters, is nevertheless able to overcome this world of appearances, to transcend it towards reality, the awareness of which means the individual's final salvation. Thus Hesse wrote in a letter dated 2nd, August, 1949 : "In *The Glass Bead Game* I have depicted the world of humanistic spirituality which respects religions but lives outside of them. In the same way I have depicted in *Siddhartha* the Brahmin's son who is in search of his specific kind of piety and wisdom beyond the tradition of his caste and religion."

No doubt, in the course of years Hesse became increasingly sceptical about the future of mankind; but he never ceased to believe that in the end the good would triumph over the evil. On 10th, August, 1950, he wrote to a young lady who had asked for his advice :

"Yes, violence is the evil, and nonviolence the only way of those who have awakened. This way will never be chosen by all, it will never be the way of those in power and of those who shape world history and conduct wars. Earth will thus never be a paradise, and mankind will never be one with God and in peace with Him. The evil ones will rule···, the indifferent ones will follow in the trail, and those few who are awakened will watch the scene; but they will also time and again set against the world of evil and violence those wonderfull saving attempts as the Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, original Christianity, the Quakers, the spirit of Gandhi.

Knowing which side one belongs to, makes us live freer and calmer. All the time one has to be prepared for suffering and violence; at no time, however, should one be prepared to kill. "

Winding up these reflections on the life and work of an outstanding poet and a great man we may say that in him the age old wisdom of the East and the rational capacities of the West had merged in an exemplary manner. The Sanskrit name Siddhartha denotes the one who has reached the final goal, i. e. the principle of reality, by becoming identical with it. It does not seem too ambitious to state that Hermann Hesse when leaving this world on 9th, August, 1962, had become a Siddhartha.

U. P. Thapliyal

Foreign Population in India - The Process of Assimilation

Consequent to the foreign invasions a substantial foreign population came to settle in India around the beginning of the Christian era. This included the Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians, the Kuṣāṇas, the Ābhīras and the like.[1] Foreign trading population coming from Western Asia such as the Romans, and the seekers after truth such as the Chinese and the south east Asians also added to this. Incidentally, in some cities such as Taxilā and Mathurā the foreign population was dominant for many centuries. Ahichatra and Arikamedu were also similar habitations.

That the population of Bhāratavarṣa was a composite one is also admitted in the literature. In the Mahābhārata the population of India is stated to be comprising the Āryans, the Mlecchas and the Saṁkaras.[2] The Buddhist legend that the Jaṁbudvīpa was inhabited by immigrants from the lands of Pūrvavideha, Uttarakuru and Aparagodāna[3], generally identified with the lands of eastern, central and western Asia respectively also suggests the magnitude of foreign population in India.

The problem of assimilating these foreigners of heterogenous character into the Indian social system must have been difficult indeed. This can be better understood in the back-drop of the Indian social set-up in second century B. C. a fully developed Varṇāśramadharma. Further general attitude of the native society to the foreign settlers as also the reaction of the settlers to this attitude are fundamental to the issue. The means adopted by both sides to achieve assimilation of course depended on these attitudes.

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[1] There is a very useful article by D. R. Bhandarkar in Indian Antiquary, Vol. XL, on foreign population in India.

[2] आर्याम्लेच्छाश्च कौरव्य तौर्मिश्राः पुरुषाविभो: Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma p. 10. 12.

[3] Sumaṅgal Vilāsini, p. 482; Divyāvadāna, pp. 125-141.

In the circumstances obtaining in India in second century B. C. and after the road to assimilation could not have been even. The political depredations of the foreigners created a crisis which shook the very basis of the social order. Putting the story in a connected form the indigenous population was hostile to the foreign rulers and their band of people for obvious reasons. The natives defeated at the battle field launched a fierce offensive at the social level where again they failed in the face of oppressive measures adopted by foreign rulers. A re-thinking then started on both sides, the Brāhmaṇas relaxed the rules of Varṇāśramadharma to suit the foreigners and foreigners on their part initiated measures to court the goodwill of the indigenous population.

These tidings at the social level are clearly reflected in the Epic and the Purāṇas. The Mahābhārata speaks that in the Kali age the world deprived of all sacrificial activities would be reduced to Mlecchahood.[1] This sorry state of affairs is indeed associated with the foreigners.[2] The Viṣṇu purāṇa says that all the caste people would be reduced to Śūdrahood in Kali age.[3] Elsewhere, it is said that almost all the kings would be Śūdras in origin.[4] The account of Kūrma Purāṇa is of special significance in this respect : "The foolish (Śūdra) commoners drive away the Brāhmins, when the latter are found occupying, the seats, and the Śūdra officers of the state beat them. The Śūdras occupy better seats in the midst of the Brāhmins and kings insult the latter.......... the Brāhmins do not venture to enter the houses of the Śūdras, but stand at the gates for the opportunity to pay respects to them.....[5]" Here the commoners, the officers and the kings refer to foreigners and their rulers.

These measures were indeed aimed at denigrading the foreign rulers by the Brāhmaṇic elite. Some crusaders even propagated complete bycott of the foreigners prohibiting the acceptance of gifts from or eating the food of or having

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1. म्लेच्छभूतं जगत्सर्वं निष्क्रियं यज्ञवर्जितम् ।
भविष्यन्ति निरानन्दमनुत्सतमथौ तथा ॥ Mahābhārata, Āraṇyaka P, 188.29.

2. बह्वोम्लेच्छराजानः पृथिव्यां मनुजाधिप ।
मिथ्यानुशासिनः पापा मृषावाद परायणाः ॥
आन्ध्राः शकाः पुलिन्दाश्च यवनाश्च नराधिपाः ।
कम्बोजा और्णिकाः शूद्रास्तथाभीरा नरोत्तम ।
न तदा ब्राह्मणः कश्चित्स्वधर्ममुप जीवति ।
क्षत्रिया अपि वैश्याश्च विक्रमस्था नराधिप । Mahābhārata Āraṇyaka p, 186. 29-31.

3. शूद्रप्रायस्तथा वर्णा भविष्यन्ति कलौ युगे । Viṣṇu Pu, VI. 1. 51; Also Bhāgavata Pu, XII.2.14; Matsya Pu, 144.78; Vāyu Pu, 58.

4. Matsya Pu, 144.40; Vāyu Pu, 58.40.

5. Kūrma Pu, I.29.17-23

any intercourse with the women of the Śakas, Yavanas, Kaṁbojas, Bāhlīkas, Khasas, etc.[1] Some cherished the hope of exterminating the Mlecchas and the restoration of Varṇāśramadharma[2]; while some others circulated stories of legendary wars in which the foreigners were vanquished.[3]

As was natural for them the foreigners supported by the sword did not submit to this humiliaion. They sought admission in the Brāhamaṇic society as the victors and when refused forced open the doors. The Brāhmaṇic resistance was inde d natural but then so was the repression carried by the foreigners.

The Gārgī Saṁhitā names a Scythian Amlāṭa who destroyed the four fold Brāhmaṇic social system.[4] The Purāṇic legend that king Viśvasphaṇi of Magadha over-threw Kṣatriya kings and destroyed the Kṣatriyas replacing the former by the other caste kings and the latter by creating a new Kṣatriya caste,[5] also indicates the same. Evidently, a new Kṣatriya class had been created. In Milindapraśna the observation that the land of Sākala was depleted of Brāhmaṇas, Śramaṇas and the scholars for twelve years[6] also appears to be a reference to the repressive measures adopted by the Yavanas leading to the exodus of indigenous population from that region. The loud claim of the Śaka rulers Rudradaman that he not only broke the Kṣatriya resistance but also humbled them, confirms this.[7]

The stories of the Śaka depredations in the Brāhmaṇic order continued to hound the minds of the people for centuries to come, so much so that when Alberuni visited the country the episode was quite fresh for his recording. "Śaka tyrannised over their country between the river Sindhu and the ocean, after he had made Āryāvarta in the midst of his realm his dwelling place. He interdicted the Hindus from considering and representing themselves as any thing but Śakas..... The Hindus had much to suffer from him, till at last they received help from the east, when Vikramāditya marched against him, put him to flight and killed him in the region of Karur between Multan and the castle of Loni."[8] It is quite understandable that such vengeance against the Brāhmaṇic society must have been accompanied with substantial force.

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[1] Atri Saṁhitā, VII. 2 quoted by P. V. Kane—History of Dharmaśāstras, Vol. II. p. 384.

[2] Agni Pu, 6. 4-5.

[3] The legendary kings Bharata (Bhāgavata Pu, IX.20.30), Viśvāmitra (Rāmāyaṇa, Bāla K. 54) and Sagara (Harivaṁśa Pu, X. 45; Viṣṇu Pu, IV, 3. 48) are reputed to have defeated and humbled the foreigners like the Śakas, Yavanas, etc.

[4] Yuga Pu, 136-39, JUPHS, Vol. XX.

[5] Bhāgavata Pu, XII. 1.36; Also see Jayaswal, K. P.—History of India, p. 42 ff.

[6] Milindapraśna, I.1.4.

[7] Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VII, p. 47

[8] Sachau, E. C.—Alberuni's India, Vol. II, p. 6.

Besides the use of force, the foreigners also applied some other measures. Some of these such as religious donations to the Brāhmaṇas and the patronage of Sanskrit language and literature were diplomatic moves aimed at placating the hostilities of the Brāhmaṇas. Incidentally, in an encounter between sage Vaśiṣṭha and Kṣatriya Viśvāmitra the foreigners are reported siding with the Brāhmaṇas. Further in the encounter between king Sagara and the foreigners Vaśiṣṭha seems to adopt a lenient attitude towards the latter.[2] These legends probably indicate some success obtained by the fereigners in their mission to win over the Brāhmaṇic support. Further, the foreigners also endeavoured to pacify the hurt feelings of the native society by adopting Indian names[3] and conducting marriages[4] with the local population.

As a result of all these measures the road was cleared for ultimate absorption of the foreigners in the society. This might have, however, been achieved in a process lasting a few centuries and in various stages, In the first stage the foreigners were treated as Śūdras of a very low order. The Kūrma Purāṇa specifically says that they, kings and commoners both, were Śūdras[5]. The other Purāṇas also refer to the rulers of the Kali age as Śūdras of very low morals.

The political compulsions of the age, however, made the revision of attitude towards the aliens imperative. Therefore, in the second stage of assimilation some softening of attitude is perceptible. A beginning in this direction is seen in the Mahābhāṣya where the foreigners such as the Yavanas, Śakas and Ābhīras are put in the category of Anirvasitaśūdras.[6] This was indeed done to provide them a superior status vis-a-vis the indigenous Śūdras who were treated as Nirvasita. The problem is tackled in the Manusmṛti as well in the same manner.[7] Here

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1. Rāmāyaṇa, Bāla K 54-55.
2. Viṣṇu Pu, 4.3.46; Also Bhāgavata Pu, 9.8.5-6; Harivaṁśa Pu, 10.41-45.
3. Names like Rudrasiṁha, Rudrasena, Vijayasena, Viśvasiṁha among the Śakas amply suggest this. Greeks, Ābhīras and Kuṣāṇas also adopted indigenous names.
4. Nahapāna had an Indian wife. Rudradaman married many Indian girls. His daughter was married to the house of Sātavāhanas. Prabhudāmā and Rudradharabhaṭṭārikā were Scythian girls married to Indian princess.
5. Kūrma Pu, 1.29. 17-23.
6. यैर्भुक्ते पात्रं संस्कारेण शुध्यति तेऽनिरवसिताः यैर्भुक्ते पात्रं संस्कारेणापि न शुध्यति ते निरवसिताः इति ॥
Mahābhāṣya, II. 4. 10
7. Manusmṛti, X, 43-44.

the Śakas, Yavanas, Pahlavas, Cīnas, etc., are described as Kṣatriyas who had degenerated to Śūdrahood owing to their neglect of the sacred laws and the Brāhmaṇas. The Epic also relates that the Yavanas, Bhojas and Mlecchas were the descendants of the cursed son of Yayāti.[1] This was done to accommodate the foreigners who could not just be condemned as Śūdras. Of course the authors of the Mahābhāṣya and the Epic were struggling to tackle the same problem of social crisis.

The problem of assimilation was also discussed at length, at the theoretical plane by the best brains of the time ,is obvious from some references in the Epic. When Māndhātā inquired of Indra if the Yavanas, Sakas, Cīnas, etc., could be brought within the bounds of proper social conduct[2], the latter summarily replied that this could be done provided they adhered to Dharma enshrined in the sacred Texts.[3] This was of course a case of simplifying the caste rules in respect of the foreigners who could not be expected to be thorough in all respects. Further, the emphasis on Vṛta or conduct as the root of social distinction in some sections of the Mahābhārata also indicates this. It is argued that originally all people were Brāhmaṇas and came to be grouped as Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, etc., owing to their conduct subsequently.[4] In this context the involvement of the foreigners cannot be ruled out.

Such dialogue on the theoretical plane added with other factors paved way for a smooth assimilation. It did not now take long for the priestly class such as the Magas among the foreigners to find a place in the Brāhmaṇic order, though initially of a lower order. The warriors among them became Kṣatriyas and there was probably little problem in their assimilation. The menials classes among the foreigners probably found a place as Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

This gigantic problem of social assimilation of the foreigners seems to have been settled by the natives by the beginning of the fourth century A. D. The social crisis thus lasted for about 400 years i.e. from second century B. C. to second century A. D.[5] The Indian society after some initial hesitation adjusted itself to the new situation so much so that by the end of the 3rd century no problem of this kind engaged the minds of the people. It needs no evidence to say that the all round progress made by the country in the Gupta age would never have been possible if there had been a social crisis of the magnitude indicated in the Purāṇas and other records. The literature of the age and epigraphic records also substantiate this supposition.

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[1] Mahābhārata, Ādi P. 80.26 ; Matsya Pu, 34.30.

[2] Mahābhārata, Śānti P. 65. 13-15.

[3] Ibid., 65. 17-21

[4] Mahābhārata, Śānti P. 181.10; The Buddhism might also have generated this re-thinking.

[5] Dr. Hazra extends this period of disturbances from 6th century B. C. to early 3rd century A. D., taking into account the internal religious factors as well. Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, p. 193 ff. The real crisis could not have, however, come before 2nd century B. C.

This speaks volumes on the assimilative power of the Brāhmaṇic or say Indian social system to have found such a quick answer to an intricate problem. The assimilation was effective and thorough. In fact by the time of the Guptas it i difficult to find any group of people which may be termed as foreign. This was on the general social plane. A deeper penetration into the subject, however,s reveals much more. They had not only been fully assimilated but had also started contributing towards the enrichment of Indian social life in the spheres like the dress and ornaments, food and drinks, cults and cult objects, social entertainments, etc.

Arvind Sharma

Cultural Relations Between Ancient India & Mayan America

Any attempt to connect the Mayan culture of Central and South America[1] with references to a Maya in Sanskrit literature,[2] on the face of it, runs the risk of being dismissed as fanciful. It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that a facile dismissal of this possibility may be premature and perhaps even rash.

I

One must begin to build up the case for a connection between the two by drawing attention to the striking phonetic similarity. Now it is true that phonetic similarity by itself leads to nothing, it can even be misleading.[3] In this case, however, it should be borne in mind that this phonetic similarity provides only the starting point of the investigation. The investigation can now be carried forward by observing that —

> the zenith of Mayan civilization was reached at a time when India had also attained an unparalleled cultural peak during the Gupta period, and Indian cultural intercourse with South-east Asia, as well as with Central and East Asia, was exceptionally close. In fact the Gupta period had begun more than a century before the Mayan classical age in 320 and Buddhism and Hinduism had been well-known in neighbouring regions for several centuries. If there was contact between Mayan America and Indianized South-east Asia,

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[1] D. P. Singhal, *India and World Civilization*, Michigan State University Press, 1967, p. 36.

[2] V. S. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1965, 74.

[3] See book review by D. H. H. Ingalls of D. D. Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 77, July-September 1957, pp. 220-227.

the simultaneous cultural advance should not appear surprising.[1]

It is interesting that Maya is called a demon in Sanskrit literature. How is this designation to be explained ? One may note that in the case of Maya his skill in architecture is also emphasized. "He is said to have built a splendid hall for the Pāṇḍavas" and is the "architect of the demons" for whom he built the "three cities."[2] So the designation of a demon is not entirely perjorative. Nevertheless, he is called a demon and how is that to be explained ? Two approaches seem to suggest themselves at this stage. It could be argued that the redactors of the Mahābhārata associated Maya with the demons because of his possible association with Buddhism. Thus similarities of design between the art of Amaravati and Mayan art have been noticed.[3] It is well-known that according to some Puranic accounts Viṣṇu assumed the incarnation of the Buddha to confound the demons. It must be borne in mind, at the same time, however, that the artistic parallels may represent contact with a general Indian cultural matrix not sufficiently differentiated into Hindu and Buddhist. The other approach would be to suggest that as the American continent lies at the bottom on an Indocentric view of the globe, it was associated with the nether-world or *patala*, the land of the demons in Hindu cosmology. In suggesting this, however, one may be crediting the ancient Indians with more geographical knowledge than they might have possessed.[4] These suggestions then may be persuasive but do not yet possess a probative value. Nevertheless, in the light of what follows, the explanation for the appellation demon applied to Maya may have to be sought along these or similar lines.

II

Although Mayan culture is distinguished by its achievements in several fields of culture, it is generally believed to have made exceptional advances in two fields—those of architecture[5] and astronomy.[6] Is it not remarkable, then, that Hindu writings should associate Maya particularly with these two fields ?

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1. D. P. Singhal, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
2. V. S. Apte, *op. cit.*, p. 744.
3. D. P. Singhal, *op. cit.*, p. 58. "Such a combination of highly specific details cannot be accidental. It suggests the existence of some kind of relationship between Mayan art and not only Buddhist art in general, but the school of Amaravati of the second century A. D. in particular" (Heine-Geldern and Ekholm), quoted *Ibid.*, p. 56.
4. See A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, London : Sidgwick & Jackson, 1969, Appendix I.
5. D. P. Singhal, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

It has already been noted how Hindu literature regards Maya as the architect of the demons and of the palace of the Pāṇḍavas at Indraprastha.[1] It may now also be noted that "of many Siddhāntas, Samrāṭ-Siddhānta, Soma-Siddhānta, Brahma-Siddhānta, Sundara-Siddhānta, Siddhānta-Sārvabhauma, Śiṣyādhivṛddha, Āryabhaṭṭa-Siddhānta, Pañca-Siddhānta, Siddhānta-Śiromaṇi, Sūrya-Siddhānta, etc. the last mentioned enjoys the pride of place. The date of the text as usual of place is uncertain but it is ascribed to Maya."[2]

There is one other remarkable circumstance which needs to be mentioned. "In addition to (a) general division of the year, the Mayas were using a long count, connecting their dates with a zero point of their own, and 'position numbers' for each day of a month. This zero date represented some unknown or mythical event or perhaps the day of creation, somewhat similar to the birth of Christ or the supposed day of the creation in 3761 B. C. of the Jewish calendar...The experts generally place it on or about 12 August 3113 B. C."[3] Students of ancient Indian lore cannot fail to be struck by the closeness of this zero date to the traditional date of the commencement of the Kali yuga—17/18 February 3102 B. C.[4] As a matter of fact the period of traditional Hindu history associated with the Mahābhārata war, has been especially fertile for the generation of eras. There is (1) an era based on the termination of the war;[5] (2) an era based on the death of Kṛṣṇa;[6] (3) an era based on the "time of the life and the wars of Bharata" called Pāṇḍava kāla[7] and (4) a Saptarṣi era which commenced 25 years after the Kali era.[8] It is thus noteworthy that the zero year of the Mayans should fall within the same timezone.

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1. "The palace of Indraprastha was constructed by the asura architect Maya and had such wonderful flooring and ceilings that visitors could not distinguish between crystal floors and pools of water. Duryodhana on a visit once fell into a pool thinking it was the floor" (Benjamin Walker *Hindu World*, Vol. II, London : George Allen & Unwin, 1968, p. 620).
2. S. R. N. Murthy, The Earth Science Studies in Sanskrit in *The Mysore Orientalist*, Volumes VI-VIII, 1972-75, p. 71.
3. D P. Singhal, *op. cit.* , p. 37.
4. S. R. N. Murthy, *op.* cit., p. 72.
5. See Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, New Delhi : S. Chand & Co., 1964, Vol. II, p. 4.
6. H. H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Purana*, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1961, p. 390. Also see Benjamin Walker, Vol. I, *op. cit* , p. 7 and R. C. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, p. 268.
7. See Edward C. Sachau, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, P. 409, Vol. II, pp. 4-5.
8. Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, Varanasi : Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1963, p. 9.

III

It is thus hard to avoid the conclusion that there was at least some awareness of the existence of Mayan America in Ancient India. The coincidences are too varied and numerous to be accidental. The exact nature of these links remains to be defined. Does the ancient Indian tradition merely echo the high reputation of the Mayans in astronomy and architecture received through Southeast Asia or was there more substantial contact? This is a question to which further research may address itself. It is hoped, however, that this paper has established a case, with a high degree of probability, for the existence of some connection between ancient India and Mayan America.

B. R. Sharma

Gaṇapati in the Domain of Yoga

According to the Indian thought the final aim of human life is to be one with the "Paramatattva" (the Ultimate-Reality). This whole universe is nothing but the manifestation of "Paramabrahman" (the Absolute-one) and the souls in all beings represent the same Supreme-Soul (Paramātmā). In other words it can be said that all beings in this entire-creation are merely the reflection of the same "All-pervading-Reality". Hence "Self-Realization" is the ultimate aim of human-life

In the entire vicious circle of births and deaths (the Caurāsī lākha yonīs, according to the Indian thought), it is only the human life when 'Self-Realization' is possible. According to the Indian Philosophy this entire Universe is nothing but the manifestation of the same Almighty. The Absolute-one, who is Infinite (beginningless and endless), is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. So far as Omnipresence of God is concerned, He is in every particle and in every movement of the whole world, for which we can say that God is in everything and everything is in God. Man is the sincere representative of Divinity on the surface of the earth and according to the spiritual science man contains not only the latent divinity but the seeds of the entire Universe. It is, perhaps, because of this reason that Christ said, "If you want to know the universe, know Thy-Self". The same eternal-truth gets expression in the following words of an Indian mystic-saint when he said to Alexander the great —

> " The world is in me. The world cannot contain me.
> The universe is in me. I cannot be confined in the universe.
> Greece and Rome are in me. The suns and stars rise and set in me".

Both for the knowledge of the entire universe (internal as well as external) and the liberation from the crude shakles of births and deaths, man must know Him-self. But, only a spiritually enlightened (aware) person can venture to do so. Christ, therefore, rightly said—"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you. He that hath eyes to see, let him see, and he that hath ears to hear, let him hear". Knowing Himself, Man would become Omniscient, endowed with the complete knowledge of past, present and future; and achieving spiritual progress, the intellectual capabilities and the worldly attainments he will get as a by-product, After Self-Realization the person is automatically redeemed from the ugly bond of Cosmic-Delusion (Māyā) and he rises to such a significant position where the laws of nature (Prakṛti) and the tricks of Māyā (delusion) do not operate on him and, they cannot bind him. Knowing the self, nothing is left to be known, hence, the ultimate aim of human life is to Realise the Self, to be one with the Absolute-one. For the unison with God, we have to merge our Unit (individual) soul with the Cosmic-Soul (Ātmā with Paramātmā), which is the very gist and the purpose of the science of yoga. But, before being one with the ultimate-Reality' we have to absorb our little individual 'ego' in the 'universal-Ego' and this would pave the way for our individual identity with the Cosmic-Identity. Once the small-ego is merged in the Supreme-Ego then the small ego assuming the shape of the Supreme-Ego automatically becomes Supreme-Ego, as a small drop of water merging in the waters of the ocean, becomes ocean. This is how, with the help of the yoga (which is both a means and an end in itself). Microcosom is transformed into Macrocosom. But, only the wise (not the learned, the educated, the scholar but the man of wisdom) and the spiritually-aware person would dare to make sublime efforts for this "Great-Unison". Kabīra, the famous Indian mystic saint, has rightly indicated towards this fact when he illustrates in the following manner —

"Water in Jar and Jar in Water,
Waters both, yet a separate surge,
None but wise can see through better,
Let Jar break and Water merge".

In order to achieve the highest-goal of human life (the Self-Realization) there are many methods, various ways, innumerable techniques and procedures; and the different religious-systems came into existence for the same purpose and almost all of them have their respective importance. But, there are three fundamental paths (ways) which help us to a very great extent to carry us to the Greatest-Aim of human life, these are—Rājayoga, (the yoga of meditation and concentration). Bhakti-yoga (the yoga of the sincere spiritual attachment with a tinge of emotionalism); and Karma yoga (the yoga of disinterested action). The significance of yoga is the greatest one as without 'yoga' Bhakti, Rāja and Karma all remain incomplete and meaningless. These three ways of Yoga, which are also Known as Rāja-Mārga, (the Royal-Path); Bhakti-Mārga, (the Path of the Sublime Emotionalism); and Karma-Mārga, (the Path of disinterested Action); are intimately related to one-another and in the long run they become one. The difference is only surfacial and appears only to the ignorant or the novice in the field of spirituality. All the paths lead to one and the same Divine-Destination.

The word 'Yoga' originated from the root (Dhātu) 'Yuja' which means 'to join', 'to unite'. Yoga, therefore, means 'Union', 'concord', 'harmony', 'merger', 'complete absorption', etc. Yoga also means to perform any action with full interest and complete concentration, which leads to efficiency and that results in achievements and success in every walk of life. The Bhagavad Gītā, the famous spiritual and Philosophical text, also endorses this interpretation of the yoga.[1] Psychologically speaking, Yoga means to Calm-down the propensities of mind, as the greatest champion of the Yoga-system defines it.[2] But in the spiritual sense yoga stands for the communion, the Unison of the Soul with the Supreme-Soul—the Microcosom with the Macrocosom: the sublime state of merger where the Sādhaka (the spiritual seeker) becomes one with the Sādhya (the Absolute-One). After attaining this sublime state of unison the Yogī becomes "Samadarśī" and where all the worldly differences, disparities and discriminations die down and the spiritual seeker (yogī) sees one in many. Diversity is replaced by Unity. Such a yogī also becomes 'Trikālajña' (one who is well-acquainted with the knowledge of the past, present and future and this is the state of salvation (Mokṣa; Nirvāṇa) where the yogī is always in the Supreme state of happiness (ecstasy) which is termed as "Bliss" (Extreme-Happiness). Yoga, which is both 'Sādhanā and Sādhya (the means and the end in itself) is of many kinds.

Gaṇapati, one of the most popular gods of the Hindu Pantheon who has been worshipped as Vighneśa (the Lord of obstacles); Buddhi-Vidhātā (the God of Wisdom and the Lord of learning); Maṅgaladātā and Siddhidātā (the Bestower of auspiciousness and success); is also considered as the fundamental foundation (the very base) of the "Ṣaṣṭa-Cakra-Sādhanā-Yoga." He is regarded as the Lord of the Mūlādhāra-cakra (the Sacrococygeal Plexus), also worshipped as the Supreme Lord of the Universe, is considered to be the most favourite deity of the yogīs.

The Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti (the Divine Power in the serpentine form) remains in the dormant form, and encircling the Svayambhū-Liṅga it lies down in the Mūlādhāra-cakra in the sleeping State. The yogī, therefore, awakens this 'Dormant-Divine-Power' (Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti) by continuously striking through

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1. Vide Bhagavad Gītā, (a) योग: कर्म सुकौशलम् । 2/50
(b) योगस्थ: कुरु कर्माणि। 2/48

2. Vide Patañjali's Darśana Sūtra (योगश्चित्तवृत्ति निरोध:)

'Mantra-Śakti' (reciting the incantations). Then with his continuous practices and incessant efforts, the yogi enables the Kuṇḍalinī to enter in the Brahmarandhra cakra (the cerebral cortex) and when the Kuṇḍalinī enters in the Brahmarandhra-cakra then one is in the 'Transcendental state', which is the state of extreme happiness, also known as Paramānanda (the Bliss). This is the state of Self-Realization (Ātmānubhūti) and this state is termed as salvation (the Nirvāṇa, the Mokṣa). In this highest state, when one is endowed with the Supreme wisdom and the Supreme vision, is the moment when the small individual soul merges its identity in the Supreme soul. The 65th chapter of the Nārada Purāṇa speaks adequately about yoga.[1]

The Yogic Cakras (Plexus) in the Human Body

In the human body there are innumerable nerves but amongst all these, Piṅgalā, 'Suṣumnā' and 'Iḍā' are most important. Wherever Piṅgalā and Iḍā cross (cut) each other, at Suṣumnā, there is formed a cakra (plexus), and there are such six cakras in the human body. As these yogic-cakras (plexus have got an extremely important place in the world of Yoga-Sādhanā, so let us have a cursory glance over these plexus.

The Mūlādhāra Cakra (the Sacrococcygeal Plexus)

The Colour of the Mūlādhāra-cakra is supposed to be red and this cakra is the resting place for the Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti (the divine-power). Here, Kuṇḍalinī in the form of 'ए' (A) and 'र' (R), remains lying dormant in between Vāyu (air) and Agni (fire). The 'Śiva Saṃhitā categoricaly speaks that simply thinking of (meditating over) Padma (the lotus), which is the very base of the Mūlādhāra cakra, all the obstacles, hardships and impediments are completely destroyed. Let us mark the verse of the text—

"मूलपद्मं यदा ध्यायेद् योगी स्वयम्भूलिंगकम् ।[2]
तदा तत्क्षणमात्रेण पापौघं नाशयेद् ध्रुवम् ।।"

The Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra (the Scral Plexus)

The second plexus of the human body is called 'Svādhiṣṭhāna cakra. This plexus has a shape like that of a lotus and it is believed that concentrating over the Svādhiṣṭhāna Plexus, the Sādhaka (the yogī, the spiritual seeker) goes on gaining beauty (handsomeness) and in no time he is endowed with the divine beauty.

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1. Vide, Nārada Purāṇa, Chapter 65.
2. Śiva Saṃhitā, 5/16.

The Maṇipura Cakra(the Epigestric Plexus)

The third cakra (Plexus) is known as Maṇipura cakra. The meditating yogī concentrates specially on this plexus, too. It is said that by concentrating on the epigestric plexus, all sorts of desires and ambitions of the yogī are fulfilled. It is, perhaps, because of this reason that the Sādhakas (the spiritual seekers, the yogīs) aspiring for the fructification of their desires and ambitions, do meditate on this plexus.

The Anāhata Cakra (the Cardiac-Plexus)

The name of the fourth plexus is Anāhata-Cakra. This plexus has a lotus-like shape and it is generally assumed that brooding over this plexus, the yogī can conquer the maladies and miseries; sorrows and misfortunes, etc. Some of the yoga-experts opine that simply concentrating on the anāhata-cakra, the spiritual-seeker (Sādhaka) becomes 'Trikālajña', one having the knowledge of past, present and future (the omniscient).

The Viśuddha Cakra (the Laryngeal and the Pharyngeal Plexus)

The fifth plexus of our body is known as Viśuddha cakra. There is an assumption that the Yogī, who mediates over the Viśuddha-cakra, acquires the knowledge of all the four Vedas and the fury of this type of yogī is quite dangerous one. It is believed that if such a yogi gets furious then the entire universe starts trembling.

The Ājñā-Cakra (the Cavernous Plexus)

The sixth and the final plexus of the human body is named as Ājñā-cakra which is the last and the most important of all the cakras. Sometimes this plexus is confused with the Brahmarandhra-cakra. Its location is just above the nose in the fore-head of the human body. Concentrating on this plexus, it is believed, the yogī is face to face with God (the Ultimate-Reality) seeing his own-self (Paramabrahman—the lord of the universe), the Sādhaka is free from the crude shackles of Māyā (the Cosmic-Delusion) and redeemed from the miseries and misfortunes of the worldly life he is elevated to such a sublime position where neither the physical ailments nor the mental maladies can affect him, and thus he enjoys the state of extreme happiness (ecstassy) which is known as "Bliss". In this context, there is an important indication in the Śiva Saṁhitā. The following verse of the text throws sufficient light on this fact —

"पुमान् परमहंसो यं यज्ज्ञात्वा नावसीदति ॥"[1]

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[1] Śiva Saṁhitā, 5/13.

The above description of the yogic-plexus has not only made us quite conversant with the six plexus of the human body but it also throws lot of light on the great importance and utility of meditating over these cakras.

The Brahmarandhra cakra (the cerebral cortex), also known as the Sahasrāra Cakra and the Śūnya Cakra, which is some times counted amongst cakras (plexus) by some experts, is regarded as the seat of Parama Śiva (the Absolute-One, the Ultimate-Reality).

The celebrated author of the Śiva-Saṁhitā firmly believes that while continuously concentrating (meditating) on the above-mentioned cakras (plexus), the yogī drinks the very nector secreted from the One-thousand-petalled-lotus which is located in the Brahma-randhra cakra (which is sometimes identified with the Ājñā Cakra). The text further says that reaching hear at Kailāśa (the Brahmarandhra cakra) the Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti meets the "Paramaśiva" (the ultimate-Truth). This is the communion of Śakti (Kuṇḍalinī, the divine power, the operative principle) with Parama Śiva (the Ultimate-truth). After this unique unison, the yogī freed from the fetters of ajñāna (the Ignorance) and redeemed from the crude shackles of Māyā (the cosmic delusion), becomes one with the Almighty God and thus attains Immortality, The relevant verse (śloka) of the text runs as follows—

"अत ऊर्ध्वं दिव्यरूपं सहस्त्रारं सरोरुहम् ।[1]
ब्रह्माण्डाख्यस्य देहस्य बाह्ये तिष्ठति मुक्तिदम् ।।
कैलासो नाम तस्यैव महेशो यत्र तिष्ठति ।।"

We, therefore, have come to know that the dormant-divine-power, the "Kuṇḍalinī Śakti" as it is popularly known, resides (in the sleeping state) in the Mūlādhāra cakra which is presided over by its Lord, i.e. Gaṇapati. Merely thinking of (meditating on) the elephant-faced god Gaṇapati, it is believed, the Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti is awakened and passing through all the plexus of the body, it ultimately enteres in the ājñā-cakra (Cavernous Plexus) and after acquiring the Siddhi (perfection) of this plexus the Kuṇḍalinī finally merges with Paramaśiva (the Supreme Lord of the universe) in the Śahasrāra cakra (the cerebtal cortex). It is believed thet the Vibrational sound, pervading in the six plexus, certainly hints at the presence of Mahāgaṇapati. According to the Gāṇapatya-yoga, as opined by Chidānanda Lahari, Gaṇapati should be meditated over in the form of the six yogic-plexus.

The Gāṇapatyas (the exclusive worshippers of Gaṇapati) firmly believe that it was the 'Gāṇapatya-Dharma' (the Religion of Gaṇapati) at first (in the very beginning) in the divine and the infinite form of Gaṇapati.

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1. Śiva Saṁhitā, 5/196-197.

The Gāṇapatyas, the exclusive worshippers of Gaṇapati, worship him as 'Paramabrahman' (the Absolute-One) and they regard him as the creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the universe; and to them Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are simply the aspects of Mahāgaṇapati.[1] It is also assumed by them that 'Śrī Gaṇapati adored by many gods e. g. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Indra and the Rūdra gaṇas like Kārttikeya, Nandīśvara, etc. with his own epithet 'Gāṇapatya'.

There are five fundamental propensities (tendencies) of the mind, i.e. Kṣipta (wavering), Mūdha (dullness), Vikṣipta (abnormal, accentric); Aikāgra (concentrated) and Niruddha (stable, calm, controlled). The peculiar nature of the mind is that whatsover the mind thinks, it tries to be one with that object. One whosoever controlling and calming down his mental tendencies (propensities) becomes one with the desired object (aim), he starts feeling unique and infinite happiness and such a controlled and concentrated mind is known as 'the state of yoga'. Amogst all such yogis, it is believed, the yogī who mediates over Gaṇapati, is the best.

Elevating his sincere devotees from the boundaries of Vidyā (Knowledge) and Avidyā (Ignorance), Śrī Gaṇapati reveals his real form to them. The Gaṇeśa vidyā (the knowledge of the meditation and worship of Gaṇeśa), therefore, is quite efficacious one and acquiring of Gaṇeśa-vidyā is considered to be the "Auspicious-One", as it is the bestower of welfare and goodness.

The Nārada-Purāṇa presents a beautiful description of the Mūlādhāra-cakra, whose Lord is Gaṇapati. The Purāṇa tells us that a four-petalled-lotus is located at this plexus. The colour of this lotus is as red as that of the Bandhūka flowers and arround this lotus the four syllables, i. e., व (va) श (śa), ष (ṣa) and स (sa), are carved Gaṇapati-vināyaka, the Rider of the Mūṣaka (the rat), accompanied by his Śakti, sits on this lotus. Informing about the symbols in the hands of the Lord of the Mūlādhāra cakra (Gaṇapati), the text says that he carries Pāśa, Aṅkuśa, Suddhāpātra and Modaka. It also speaks about his cheerful and pleasant disposition (pose). Let us mark the original text—

> "मूलाधारे बादिशान्तबीजयुक्ते चतुर्दले ।[2]
> बन्धूकाभे स्वशक्त्या तु सहितायां शुभाय च ।।
> पाशांकुशसुधापात्रमोदकोल्लास पाणये ।।"

To every ambitious yogī who aspires to make a fast progress in the world of spirituality, it is almost imperative to meditate first of all on Gaṇapati sitting in the Mūlādhāra-cakra (which is the very base of the yogic Sādhanā). It is

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1. For this vide (a) Gaṇsśa Purāṇa (b) Gaṇeśa Gītā, (c) Gaṇapatyatharvśīrṣopanṣad, etc.

2. Nārada Purāṇa, Firsthalf. III, 65/81-82.

only with the grace and blessings of the Lord of the Mūlādhāra-cakra that t Sādhaka (the yogī) attains the exalted state of "Paramānanda" (the Bliss). Gaṇapati (the Lord of the Mūlādhāra-cakra) is also regarded as "Purāṇa Puruṣottama" (the Ancient god) and "Paramabrahman" (the Ultimate-Reality), the Lord of the Universe). The following verse (Śloka) of the Gaṇeśa Purāṇa has furnished an important indication pertaining to this fact—

"पूर्णानन्दः परानन्दः पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः ।"[1]

About the actual location of the Mūlādhāra cakra, the abode of Gaṇapati, the Yājñavalkya-Smṛti helps us to a very great extent. Though we know that this is the very first plexus of the human body yet to trace the exact location of this plexus we have to seek the support from the Smṛti of the Yājñavalkya which provides a detailed description in this context, not only about the human body but it locates the sacrococcygeal-plexus" even in the bodies of animals, birds, trees and the Earth, too. The Yājñavalkya Smṛti (which was written during the period between 100 B. C. to 300 A. D.)[2] tells us that so far human beings are concerned, the Mūlādhāra-cakra is situated in the centre of the body (that is just two "aṅgulas" above the aṇus and two "aṅgulas" below the phallic (Liṅga). The author of the Yājñavalkya Smṛti says that this is Gaṇeśa's (Gaṇapati) abode were he abides permanently. But he also believes that besides Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Śeṣa and Kūrma, too, reside here. While talking about the animals, Yājñavalkya opines that the heart is located in the centre of the body, which is the living (residing) locality of Gaṇeśa. In the body of the birds, according to the Smṛtikāra, the dwelling place of Gaṇapati is the centre of the central stomach. Gaṇeśa's abiding place, as far trees are concerned, is in the roots. The author of the Smṛti is also of the opinion that Gaṇapati, Śeṣa and Kūrma live in the Centre of the Earth and it is they who sustain the Earth. Let us mark exact śloka (verse) of the text—

"गुदात्तु द्व्यङ्गुलादूर्ध्वमधो मेढ्राच्च द्व्यङ्गुलात् ।
देहमध्यं तयोमध्ये मनुष्यानीमितीरितम् ॥
चतुष्पदां तु हृदयं तिरश्चां तुन्दमध्यमम् ।
द्विजानां तु वराराहे तुन्दमध्यमितीरितम् ॥"[3]

While refering to the abode of Gaṇapati (Mūlādhāracakra), the Gāṇapatyatharvaśīrṣopaniṣad also speaks about him as the deity who pervades in all the three Śaktis (personifications of strength and power). The Upaniṣad indicates towards his significance in the world of Yoga when it says that the yogīs (the spiritual aspirants) continuously mediate on Gaṇapati.

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[1] Gaṇesa Purāṇa. 2/15/103

[2] Vide, P. V. Kane's History of Dharma-Śāstras, V. I

[3] Vide Yājñavalkya's Smṛti.

"त्वं मूलाधारस्थितोऽसि नित्यम् ।
त्वं शक्ति त्रयात्मकः ।
त्वां योगिनो ध्यायन्ति नित्यम् ।"[1]

Dhanapatisūrī, a notable commentator on "the Śaṅkaradigvijaya" (written in the 10th century A. D), also speaks about Gaṇapati's association with the Mūlādhāra cakra. The famous commentator says that the shape of this plexus resembles with the Lotus and the colour of the Plexus is supposed to be golden. Dhanapatisūrī believes that it is imperative for a yogī to mediate over Gaṇapati (who resides in the Mūlādhāra-cakra)—

"किं च हेमनिभे चक्रे मूलाधारे चतुर्दले । गणेशोऽस्ति……… ।"[2]

Through his proverbial expression, Saint Garībadāsa also talks about the same fact while he associates (connects) Gaṇapati with the first plexus—

"मूल चक्रे गनेस बासा रक्त वरन जहं जानिये ।"[3]

Another famous saint Kinā Rāma, an aghori saint (one who does not discriminate in anything), regards Gaṇeśa as the deity of the Mūlādhāra cakra and presents an exquisitely beautiful description of Gaṇeśa in his text. The saint-poet has also assured that simply looking at (means just thinking of) the lord of the Mūlādhāra cakra, the yogī becomes a great intellectual and a great scholar. Let us mark the following stanza from his text—

"मूलचक्र वश गूद मझारा । चारिपत्र जनु अगिनि अङ्गारी ।[4]
ताहि कमल महं योनि त्रिकोना । ता महं पुरुष बसै गहिमोना ।
'रा' अक्षर जस दीपक जोबती । तेहि महं पुरुष कान्ति उद्योति ।।
नाम गणेशे 'अरुण' तन सोई । तेहि लखत बड़पण्डितहोई ।।
मानसिक पूजा तहवा कीजै । लड़ुआ धूप गणेशही दीजै ।।"

Ādya Śaṅkarācārya, (the greatest champion of Monism) who lived in the last quarter of the 8th century A. D., believed that the Tāntric technique of meditating over Gaṇapati brings early success (in the spiritual field and also precipitates in achieving the desired results. The following verse would be sufficient to speak of his belief—

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1. Gaṇapatyatharvaśirsopaniṣad, 6.

2. Vide, Dhanapatisūrī's commentary on Śaṅkaradigvijaya, 15/350.

3. Saint Garībadāsa's Provrbial saying.

4. Vide, Keenā Rāma's Pothi-Vivekaśāra.

"आवाह्य विघ्नेश्वरमर्चयित्वा
प्रागुक्तया तन्त्रविधान क्लृप्तया ॥[1]
निवेदयित्वा सह भक्ष्यले ह्यैः
प्राज्यैश्च साज्यैरपि भोज्यजातेः ॥"

According to the "Paraśu Rāma-Kalpa Sūtra", in the Tantrāgama-meditation"; the yogi must concentrate first of all on Gaṇapati.

"परिष्कृतपाण्येका दशाकं प्रभिन्नकटमानन्द ।
पूर्णमशेषविघ्नध्वंसनिघ्नं विघ्नेश्वरं ध्यात्वा ॥"[2]

For helping a yogī to mediate on Gaṇapati, the Gāṇapatyatharva-Śīrṣopaniṣad presents a vivid and a beautiful picture of the deity (Gaṇeśa). The Upaniṣad describing him as the Ādikāraṇa (the First-cause) says that he appeared in the very beginning of the creation and Gaṇapati, the text holds, is beyond both Prakṛti and Puruṣa (the cosmic-Being and the operative principle). The author of the Upaniṣad also believes that Gaṇeśa blesses his devotees and the yogī who mediates on such a Gaṇapati attains the exalted position of the greatest yogī. Let us read the last lines of the text—

"भक्तानुकम्पनं देवं जगतकारणमुच्युतम् ।
आविर्भूतं च सृष्टयादौ प्रकृतेः पुरुषात् परम् ॥
एवं ध्यायति यो नित्यं स योगी योगिनां वरः ।"[3]

The Gaṇeśa-Gītā, one of the main scriptures of the Gāṇapatyas (the exclusive worshippers of Gaṇapati), written sometimes in the period of 10th-11th century A. D. speaks very high of the significance of yoga. The following verse of the scripture would adequately indicate towards this fact—

"ध्यायन्तः परमं ब्रह्म चित्ते योगवशीकृतैं ।[4]
भूतानि स्वात्मना तुल्यं सर्वाणि गणयन्ति ते ।"

In the Gaṇeśa Gītā (which was revealed by Gaṇapati to satisfy the spiritually sublime curiosities of his most sincere devotee (i. e. King Vāreṇya), Gaṇeśa has also directed the yogīs to renounce all the actions mentally inorder to attain the state of constant happiness. One line of the text will be sufficient to help us in this context—

"मनसा सकलं कर्म त्यक्त्वा योगी सुखं वसेत् ।"[5]

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1. Ādya Śaṅkrāchārya; Prapnchasāra, 16/36.
2. Vide, Paraśu Rāma K alpasūtra, Khaṇda, 2/4.
3. Vide, Ganapatyatharvaśīrṣad, 9.
4. Gaṇeśa-Gītā, 1/16.
5. Gaṇeśa Gītā, 4/12.

The famous yogī-saint Jñāneśvara (also known as Bālayogeśvara), who belonged to the 13th century A. D., speaks about the 'aumkāra' form of Gaṇapati to be meditated on. It is believed, according to the Hindu thought, that 'aum' (ॐ) is the very base of this universe. Many Purāṇas and other religious texts vividly describe this fact, While speaking about Gaṇapati's aumkāra-form he also seems to believe that this form of the God is accessible only with the grace of the guru (the spiritual preceptor).

"अकार चरण युगल । उकार उदार विशाल ।
मकार महामंडल । मस्तकाकारें ॥
है तिन्ही एक बटले । ते थे शब्द ब्रह्म कवलेलें
तै मियां । गुरु कृपा न मिलें ॥"[1]

In the Gaṇeśa-Gītā, highlighting the importance of the yogic practice, Gaṇapati says that by practicing the science of breath, the yogī starts acquiring the knowledge of the past and future too. The following verse of the text helps us in this direction—

"अतीतानागतज्ञानी ततः स्याज्जगती तले ।."[2]

In the fifth chapter of the Gaṇeśa-Gītā, Gaṇapati makes us quite conversant with a very significant fact, so far practice of yoga is concerned. The text furnishes an important and detailed information to the yoga-aspirants, telling them that in what type of internal and external situations yoga should not be practised. The scripture of the Gāṇapatyas says that a depressed, tired, anxious, hungry or a worried person should not practice yoga. It also gives a detailed description of the places where the practice of yoga should not be carried out. Let us read the exact ślokas (verses) of the text—

"तप्तः श्रान्तो व्याकुलो वा क्षुधितो व्यग्रचिन्तकः ।
कालेऽतिशीतेऽत्युष्णे वाऽनिलाग्न्यम्बुसमाकुले ॥
साध्वनावतिजीर्णे गोः स्थाने साग्नौ जलान्तिके ।
कूपकूले श्मशाने च नद्यां भित्तौ च मर्मरे ॥
चैत्ये सवाल्मिके देशे पिशाचादिसमावृते ।
नाभ्यसेद् योगविद् योगं योगध्यानपरायणः ।"[3]

The above mentioned places, conditions, situations, times, and atmospheres, etc. are regarded as unsuitable for the practice of yoga. Gaṇapati, in the same text, warns the yogīs (spiritual-aspirants) of the possibilities of the bad effects caused

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1. Jñāneśvara, Jñāneśvarī, I/19-20.
2. cf. Gaṇeśa Gītā, 4/33.
3. cf. Gaṇeśa Gītā, 5/7-9.

if above mentioned facts are not adhered to by the Yogīs. The text says that the practice of yoga in the prohibited situations and conditions would definitely cause many defects, e. g. loss of memory, dumbness, deafness, laziness, fever, dullness, etc. Let us observe the exact text—

"स्मृतिलोपश्च मूकत्वं बाधिर्यं मन्दता ज्वरः ।
जडता जायते सद्यो दोषाज्ञानाद्धि योगिनः ॥
एते दोषाः परित्याज्या योगाभ्यसनशालिना ॥
अनादरे हि चैतेषां स्मृति लोपादयो ध्रुवम् ॥"[1]

Throwing light on the exalted position of Gaṇapati in the world of yoga-Sādhanā, Brahmā says that so far yoga-sādhanā is concerned, Gaṇapati is unique. Sat-asat (Truth-untruth) and Vyakta-avyakta (Manifest-unmanifest) He Himself is—

"सदसद्व्यक्तमव्यक्तं सर्वंहि गणनायकः ॥"[2]

Ādiśaṅkarācārya (who lived in 788 to 8.0 A. D) also meditates on the yogic-form of Gaṇapati (which is beyond the reach of thinking). He says that the radiance of his task is extremely charming and he (Gaṇapati) always abides in the hearts of the Yogīs. His proverbial saying gets expression in the following way—

"नितान्तकान्तदन्तकान्तिमन्तकान्तकात्मजं
अचिन्तस्वरूपमन्तहीनमन्तरायकन्तनम् ।
हृदन्तरे निरन्तरं वसन्तमेव योगिना ।
तमेकदन्तमेव तं विचिन्तयामि संततम् ॥"[3]

Since the very hoary past, Gaṇapati has been worshipped by the great yogīs with full devotion. The Upāsanā-khaṇḍa of the Gaṇeśa-Purāṇa informs us that once yogeśvara (lord of the yogīs) Viṣṇu, who himself is capable to confer siddhis (spiritual success), also meditated over Gaṇapati at Siddhi-Kṣetra. The Purāṇa also informs us that during his penances Viṣṇu recited Ṣaḍākṣara Mantra (six-syllabled·incantation) inorder to please Gaṇapati. The following verses of the text speak adequately of this fact—

"प्राणानायम्य मूलेन ध्यात्वादे वं गजाननम् ।
आवाहनादिमुद्राभिः पूजयित्वा मनोमयैः ॥
द्रव्यैर्नानाविधश्चैव षोडशोचोपचारकैः ।
जजाप परमं मन्त्रं विष्णु योगिश्वरेश्वरः ॥"[4]

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[1] cf. Gaṇeśa Gītā, 5/10-11.

[2] cf. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, 1/12/9.

[3] Ādi Śāṅkarāchārya, Sri Gaṇeśa Pañca Ratna, 5.

[4] Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, 1/18/6-7.

Gaṇapati has been regarded as "Paramabrahman" (the Absolute one) and the "Light of Lights" (Jyotiśvarūpa). The text also tells that while Gaṇeśa is the creator of the obstacles he is also considered as the Originator of the art. The author of the Purāṇa while saluting him gives expression to his ideas in the following way—

"प्रकाशस्वरूपं नभोवायुरूपं
विकारदिहेतुं कलाकालभूतम् ।
अनेकक्रियानेकशक्ति स्वरूपं
सदाशक्तिरूपं गणेशं नमाम: ।।"[1]

According to the Rāmacarita Mānasa, Gaṇapati was not only the son of Śiva and Pārvatī but he is Paramabrahman (the Absolute one) and he incarnates himself in different ages. He always remained worthy to be worshipped by the yogīs and Sādhakas. Even the yogī of the yogīs (Mahādeva) also meditates on Gaṇapati. Gosvāmī Tulsīdāsa informs that yogeśvara Śiva and Jagajjananī (universal Mother) Pārvatī meditated on Gaṇapati in the palace of Himācala, on the auspicious occasion of their Marriage ceremony—

"मुनि अनुसासन गनपतिहि पुजेऊ संभु भगनि ।
को सुनि संयम करे जनि सुर अनादि जियजानि ।।"[2]

Bhagavān Śaṅkara, the Lord of the Yogīs, explaining himself the greatness of Gaṇapati to Pārvatī, regards him as Īśvara (Absolute-one), Bhuvaneśvara (the Lord of the universe) and Paramabrahman (the ultimate-Reality). He also ays that God Himself has preferred to be the son of Pārvatī. The following verses are important to be noted here—

"लीलाविग्रहवानेष: स्वप्रकाशो गुणातिग:[3]
शुद्धसत्वमय: सर्वजीवेशो भुवनेश्वर: ।।
परमात्मा गुणातीत: पुत्रतां ते समागत: ।।"

The Gaṇeśa Purāṇa while presenting a philosophical analysis of Gaṇapati regards him as manifest-energy (power) and says that he is above Māyā (the cosmic delusion). According to this text, simply thinking of Gaṇapati the worldly confusions and the deceptions resulted from the Cosmic delusion, are completely destroyed.[4]

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1. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, Upāsanā Khaṇḍa, 13/11.
2. Goswāmī Tulsī dāsa's Rāma-Carit Mānasa, Bālakāṇḍa, 100.
3. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, 2/82/5, 8.
4. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa, 31/14-15.

Directing all the yogīs, the Sādhakas, the Curious-ones and the devotees for the meditation of Gaṇapati, the Purāṇa says that the Immanent one and the Destroyer of all the obstacles (Gaṇapati) should be meditated and worshipped—

"अनादिनिधनो देवो जगद्व्यापी गजाननः ।[1]
अयमेव सदा पूज्यः सर्वविघ्नविनाशनः ।।"

Gāṇapatyas, the exclusive worshippers of Gaṇapati, regards him as the ultimate Reality, the Infinite and the Absolute-one. Gaṇapati, according to them is the creator, preserver and Destroyer of the entire universe. The following prayer used by them speaks of Gaṇapati as the Supreme Lord of the universe—

"Praise be to thee, oh Gaṇapati ;.
Thou art the visible Reality—

The Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, the supreme Brahman, the spirit Manifest. The universe is born from thee. The universe is manifest in thee-earth water, fire, air, Thou art Brahmā, Thou art Viṣṇu, Thou art Rūdra. Thou art superior to the Trimūrti. Om ; praise be to thee, Oh Gaṇapati".[2]

Gaṇapati, who is regarded as paramabrahman (the Absolute-one) is also considered as the 'ultimate-Reality' in the world of yoga, and He is believed to be beyond the reach of the Vedas. The following verse of the Gaṇeśa-purāṇa is quite important to be noted in this context--

"परमब्रह्मस्वरूपाय निर्गुणाय नमो नमः ।[3]
चिदानन्दस्वरूपाय वेदानामप्यगोचरः ।।"

From the above study, therefore, we are bound to come to the conclusion that Gaṇapati, who has been an extremely important god in the domain of meditation and concentration, occupied an exalted position in the world of yoga sand he has always been the most favourite-deity of the yogīs.

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1. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa 2/125/30-31.
2. Vide (a) Śaṅkaradigvijaya (b) Gaṇeśa-Upaniṣad.
3. cf. Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, 2/37/4.

U. N. Dhal

Churning of the Ocean and Goddess Lakṣmī

The epics and the Purāṇas describe the birth of the Goddess Lakṣmī from different parentage; in addition to that they also describe the popular myth of the churning of the Ocean, where this goddess emerges as one of the entities from the Ocean. Though this myth is dealt in wealth of details in different texts, the earliest version of this is recorded in the Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa texts[1] which is accepted as the urkern of the epics and the Purāṇas.

Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa Texts

The earliest account of the myth is referred to in connection with the genealogy of Yaduvaṃśa. Kārtavīryārjuna is said to be so valiant that he could agitate the turbulent ocean by his thousands of hands. This agitation of the ocean by Kārtavīryā rjuna is compared with the churning of the Ocean with the help of the mountain Mandara thrown into it by the gods and the demons.

pravartayat tadā rājā sahasreṇa ca bāhunā /
devāsura samākṣiptāḥ kṣīrodam iva Mandraḥ //

Brahma Purāṇa 13, 181; Harivaṃśa 1873; Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 2, 69, 33; Vāyu Purāṇa 94, 33; Matsya Purāṇa 43, 356, PPL-P. 416.

Besides this casual reference to the Churning of the Ocean, this myth also is referred to in connection with the birth of Dhanvantarī

Dhanvantareḥ saṃbhavoyaṃ śrūyatām iha vai dvijāḥ /
sa saṃbhūtāḥ samudrāt tu mathyamāne'mṛte purā //

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[1] Prof. W. Kirfel tried to investigate the original five characteristics viz ; *Sarga, Pratisarga, Vaṃśa, Manvantara, Vaṃśānucarita* of the Purāṇas and their gradual development through addition. elaboration and emendation. *As Purāṇa Paṇcalakṣaṇa* is the result of such study, which shows how the five characteristics took different shape through various hands during different period of time. For further information refer to *Das Purāṇa Paṇcalakṣaṇa*, Leiden, 1927 Introduction pp-IX-IL.

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 2, 69, 9; Harivaṃśa 1523; Vāyu Purāṇa 92, 8. PPL. P-370.

Apart from this occasional reference to Dhanvantarī's birth from the churning of the Ocean, we are told that Prahlāda was defeated in the war which took place during the time of the churning of the ocean :

Prahlād nirjito yuddha Indreṇāmṛtamanthane |

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 2, 72, 79a; Matsya Purāṇa 47, 48; Padma Purāṇa 1, 13, 185-6; Vāyu Purāṇa 97, 79b; PPL. P. 490.

It appears from the above citations that the basic story element of the myth forms a part of the Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa texts. Here the only motif of the myth is to get back amṛta. The gods and the demons churned the ocean whereas the mountain Mandara serves as the churning rod.

This myth, though casually referred to in different contexts in the Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa texts, appears before us in a definite form in the Rāmāyaṇa. In the later literature[1] there is frequent reference to Lakṣmī's origin from the ocean for which she is called—*Kṣīrodatanayā*, *Kṣīrasāgarakanyā*, *Dogdhābdhitanayā*, *Sindhukanyā* etc. So it is better to take up the study of the myth for getting an insight to her birth from the ocean.

Out of the two versions of the myth in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa version appears to be earlier than the version in the Mahābhārata. In the Rāmāyaṇa the narration is straight and simple without much elaboration.

Rāmāyana 1. 44

In the Kṛtayuga the sons of Diti and Aditi wanted to be ageless, immortal and free from disease. So they decided to churn the ocean to get the elixir of life—

Kṣīroda manthanaṃ kṛtvā rasaṃ prāpsyāma tatra vai | 176

The gods and the demons use Mandara mountain as the churning rod and the snake Vāsuki as the rope and churn the ocean. As the result of churning six gems appear, they are—(1) Dhanvantarī, (2) Apsarasas, 'heavenly nymphs', (3) Vāruṇi 'the daughter of Vāruṇa', (4) Uccaiḥśravas', the heavenly steed', (5) jewel, Kaustubha and (6) Amṛta. In the above emuneration of objects there is no mention of the goddess Lakṣmī.[2]

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[1] The Purāṇas and the classical literature bear abundant testimony to this; Sharma, H. D. and Sardesai, N. G. *Amarakoṣa* (Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana of Amara Siṅha), Poona 1941, 1, 27.

[2] The description of the goddess Lakṣmī rising out of the Ocean occurs in the three south Indian manuscripts (M1, M2, M3) of Rāmāyaṇa; in view of its later addition to these

Mahābhārata 1, 15-17

The same myth is narrated in an elaborate manner in the Mahābhārata. It may be that the Urkern of the legend of Purāṇa Pañalakṣaṇa as well as of the Rāmāyaṇa was before the redactor of the Māhābharata, who not only utilised it and tried to bring about a harmonious combination of the above two story elements, but also tried to elaborate and expand the text Kernel in the light of *avatāravāda*. So we find that while the redactor of Rāmāyaṇa tried to state the legend in eighteen verses, the redactor of the Mahābhārata could take three chapters (15-17) for it.

The Mahābhārata version 1, 15, 10ff states—when the gods met in a conclave on the mountain Meru after performing severe austerities for amṛta, Nārāyaṇa advised Brahmā to churn the ocean with the gods and demons to get amṛta as well as the jewels and herbs. The preparation for the churning started. When the gods failed to tear out Mandara for using it as the churning rod, Nārāyaṇa came to their rescue and at his advice Ananta, the king of snakes uprooted Mandara. Mandara was utilised for the churning rod and Vāsuki the snake king as the cord; at the request of gods the king of tortoise held the mountain on his back. The demons took hold of Vāsuki by the hood, the gods held him by the tail and started churning. As a result of excessive churning various kinds of exuding gums of big trees as well as the juice of herbs and plants flowed into the water. On account of the foamy milk-like water mixed with those juices vested with the properties of amṛta and liquid extract of gold, gods attained

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texts, the editor of the Rāmāyaṇa (critical edition) has put it to the foot note No, 966, p. 257—

tato dīrghena kālena cotpannā kamalālayā
atīva aūpasampannā prathame vayasi sthitā

sarvābharṇapūrṇāṅgī sarvalakṣaṇa lakṣaṇitā
mukuṭaṅkitacitrāṅgī nīlakuñcita mūrdhajā

taptahātaka saṃkāśā muktābharaṇa bhūṣitā
kanyā yasyāḥ prabhāveṇa Indra aivaryam āpnuyāt

Caturbhujā mahādevī padmahastā varānanā

sā ca devī tathotpanna padma Śrīr lokavisrutā |
sā padmā padmanābhasya yayau bakṣasthalaṃ Hareḥ ||

The above descriqtion of the goddess Śri, her beauty and brillance seems to be much laert and this might have been possible only when Sri could attain the state of supremacy as the divinity per excellence and was finally united with Viṣṇu; but it is evident that she cuuld not reach this state during the composition of the earlier version of the text. The later redactors have tried to insert it to make it a complete whole. Similarly, the editor of the critical edition of Harivaṃśa did not accept the chapter on the churning of the ocean, which appeared in the Bhaviṣya parva (3), Ch. 30 of the Cld edition (Bombay) and has placed it under the Appendix-I (No. 41) in the vol. II in view of its posterity.

immortality (1, 16, 26b). The milky water of the ocean agitated turned into clarified butter; but inspite of it amṛta did not come out of it. When the gods and the demons were spent up, they resorted to Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa revitalised them; then the operation continued.

Out of the ocean seven entities and objects emerged; they are—(1) Soma "the moon", (2) Goddess Śrī, dressed in white garment, (3) Goddess Surā, (4) The white steed Uccaiḥśravā, (5) Kaustubha, the celestial gem, (6) Dhanavantarī, (7) with a white vessel of Amṛta. Soma, Surā, the heavenly horse and the goddess Śrī—these four products went over to the gods; the celestial gem Kaustubha graced the breast of Nārāyaṇa when the gods possessed the major portion of the entities the demons felt irritated, as a consequence there was scramble among them for the possession of amṛta.[1]

As it appears from the Mahābhārata version, goddess Śrī did not attain so much prominence; and the attainment of Śrī was never the motif of the legend.

Early Saivaite element of the Myth

(*a*) *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 1, 25—Vāyu Purāṇa 54.*

Brahmāṇḍa and Vāyu versions which developed out of the same text Kernel describe the legend in the equal manner. In the Brahmāṇḍa-Vāyu version, the story took a different turn and on the request of the gods and sages, Vāyu relates the story in order to justify as to how Śiva's throat became black. In order to show the superior power of Śiva, who is the only powerful god to drink poison, the ferocious nature of the poison has been described in detail and Viṣṇu himself has been described to be black by the heat of the poison—

Nirdagdha Raktagaurāṅgo Kṛta Kṛṣṇa Janārdana

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa—1, 25, 57a; Vāyu Purāṇa, 1, 54, 58b; and the story ends just with the drinking of the Kālakūṭa poison by Śiva. This is definitely a Saivaite redaction of the myth which does not refer to the cause of the churning of the ocean or any other entity born from the ocean.

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[1] The Mahābhārata (Cr. Edn.) does not include the possession of Lakṣmī by the gods as the cause of discontent among the demons, but the manuscripts like Vi, Dn, D1, 3, 4 of Mahābhārata state that the bone of contention between the demons and gods was not only amṛta but also the graceful divinity Lakṣmī, which is taken to be a later addition. So it is put in the foot note No. 277, P, 125 to the Mahābhārata (Cr. Edn.)

amṛtārthe ca Lakṣmyarthe mahāntam vairamāśritaḥ /

But as the goddess Lakṣmī did not attain so much prominence by that time, the text has been put in the foot note only.

(*b*) *Matsya Purāṇa 248-250*

The myth in the Matsya Purāṇa show definite improvement over the Brahmāṇḍa-Vāyu version. It seems clear that though the redactor of Matsya Purāṇa knew the text tradition of the Mahābhārata and have preserved and elaborated it, still like the Brahmāṇḍa-Vāyu version, they have tried to insert the glory and greatness of Śiva in to it.

The Mt. version of the myth runs thus: while the gods and the demons were engaged in a terrible fight, Śukrācārya the preceptor of the demons could bring all the dead demons in the war back to life with the help of Sañjīvanīvidyā, the gods became powerless and distressed. So they were advised by Brahmā to make truce with the demons and to churn the milky-ocean to obtain amṛta which would make them immortal. The gods did accordingly; in the preparation of Churning, the demon king Bali was very much helpful to the gods and the churning proper started.

As a result of churning (Mbh. 1, 16, 33-35; Mt. 249, 2-4) the following objects and entities emerged out of the ocean: they are—(1) the brilliant Moon, (2) Goddess Śrī, (3) Surā, (4) the white horse, (5) the divine jewel. The Mt. version faithfully preserves the Mbh. version of the myth upto this, then the redactors of the Mt. add seven new objects to the old list to make it fourteen in number. The other objects are—(6) Pārijāta Shurb with branches of golden flowers, (7) Kālakūṭa, the virulent poison, (8) Dhanvantarī the father of Āyurveda, (9) Madirā, the intoxicating drink personified, (10) Amṛta, (11) Surabhi, the celestial cow, (12) Gajendra, the celestial elephant, (13) Chatra, the royal umbrella, (14) Kuṇḍala, the ear-rings.

In the Mbh. account except Kaustubha there was no mention of distribution of different objects among different divinities. Due to further addition and elaboration on the text Kernel of the Mbh. in the Mt. account we find such embellishment and development of the text. The fourteen objects and entities emerging out of the ocean have been alloted to different gods as a result Viṣṇu took over Lakṣmī and Kaustubha—

Jagrāha Kamalām Viṣṇuḥ Kaustubham Camahāmaṇiṁ

(Mt. 250, 3a). Indra got the elephant and the Kuṇḍala, while the celestial horse and Dhanvantarī were alloted to the Sun. Varuṇa got Chatra and Vāyu took Kuṇḍala.

In the Mbh. version of the myth Śrī was not united with Viṣṇu and went over to the gods only; the union of Lakṣmī with Viṣṇu took place much later, after which only the redactor of Mt. could formulate this text of bringing about the happy union of Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī.

The Mythology in Viṣṇu Purāṇa and in Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa of Padma Purāṇa.

The versions of Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa of Padma Purāṇa 5, 4, and Viṣṇu Purāna 1, 9 record the same story and make it clear that they have accepted the story element of the myth from the same source; so it is put together.

In order to find out the source of the myth of Pd-vi, one has to look to the Lalitopākhyāna which is an appendix to Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 4, 9-10. The text tradition of this agrees with the versions of Pd-vi to a greater extent and serves as the limit,

In the Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa versions of the myth, there is no detailed account of the story except a few reference to it; there is no mention of the origin of Śrī from the churning of the Ocean. On the other hand in the same texts-like Pd and Vi Śrī is born as the daughter of Bhṛgu and Khyāti, and is described as the sister of Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, and as the wife of Nārāyaṇa. This account of Śrī's birth is definitely earlier than her origin from the churning of the Ocean :

> *Bhṛgoḥ khyātyām samutpannā Śrīḥ pūrvamudadheḥ punaḥ |*
> *devadānavayatnena prasūtāmṛtamanthane ||*
> Vi, 1, 9, 142. Cf. Vi. 1, 9, 148b.

The later redactors while trying to mention Śrī and her ancestors take the opportunity of inserting Śrī and other objects originating from the churning of the Ocean and at the same time they also attempt to hermonise the tradition of Śrī's birth from Bhṛgu and Khyāti with the Samudramanthana legend, where Śrī is born out of the churning of the Ocean :

> *Kṣīrabdhau tu tathā Lakṣmīḥ kilotpannāḥ mayā śrutam |*
> *Khyātyām Bhṛgoḥ samutpannā etadāha katham bhavān ||*
> Vi, 1, 8, 16, Pd. 5, 4, 1;

The redactor clarifies the birth of Śrī as the daughter of Bhṛgu and Khyāti in her first descent and in the next she is described to have originated from the milky Ocean with amṛta and other products.

The story of Śrī's birth from Samudramanthana is based upon a curse[1] for which Śrī disappeared from the world, so that her recovery was felt most essential.

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[1] Vi-Pd and other Puranic texts mention the curse of Durvāsā as the cause of her loss and Churning of the Ocean follows as consequence, but Pd (Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa) 5, 4, 87ff inserts a

In the earlier version of the myth, the recovery of amṛta was the main motif for which the gods had to fight with demons later on; but here Śrī becomes the main theme for the churning of the Ocean. The curse of Durvāsā must have been introduced into this legend from the author's desire to bring about this glory and greatness of Śrī as the consort of Viṣṇu. The mythology of Śrī's birth from the churning of the Ocean takes a new turn due to the insertion of the Durvāsā episode : Durvāsā in course of his journey got a garland of Santānaka flowers from a Vidyādharī and presented it to Indra, instead of keeping it for himself. Indra put it on Airāvata, his heavenly mount, who threw it on the ground and thereby disrespected the sage. Due to such insolent behaviour, Durvāsā cursed Indra--instead of honouring the garland, which is the dwelling of Śrī (*Śriyo dhāma*) you have neglected it by throwing it on the ground due to intoxication of power, as a consequence Śrī will go to the ground from the Trailokya (whose king is Indra).

maddattā bhavatā yasmāt kṣīptā mālā mahītale /
tasmāt praṇaṣṭalakṣmīkam trailokyaṃ te bhaviṣyati //
Vi, 1, 9, 16 ; Pd. 5, 4, 17b, 18a.

Śakra had to apologise before Durvāsā, but to no effect; on the contrary in consequence of the curse, Śakra and the three worlds became *niḥśrīka*' 'bereft of Śrī'. No more sacrifices were performed, the ascetics did not observe penance, gifts were not given away, all vegetable products, plants, and herbs withered and died, people were overpowered by cupidity due to the absence of Lakṣmī, the goddess of plenty and prosperity; people lost their vigour, energy and merit (Vi. 1, 9, 26-28a; Pd. 5, 4, 22b-24a). When the three worlds were deprived of the favour of Lakṣmī, the gods became weak and were vanquished by the demons; so they repaired to Brahmā for succour. Accompanied by Brahmā, they

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legend to account for the temporary separation of Śrī from Viṣṇu which is peculiar to this text only. Bhṛgu, father of Lakṣmī was the lord of Lakṣmīpura a city on the Narmadā given away to him by Brahmā. Lakṣmī, after her marriage with Viṣṇu instigated him to request Bhṛgu for its return; while Viṣṇu asked Bhṛgu for it Bhṛgu felt offended and cursed Viṣṇu to be born upon earth ten times and to be separated from his wife and to have no issue.

The curse of Durvāsā has been elaborately presented in the Vi-Pd (5) account, but Agni and Bhāgavata refer the same only briefly without narrating the circumstances. The absence of Durvāsā episode in the earlier version of the legend points to its posterity and later embellishment to the original story; But Prof. Vonda interprets it to show the 'negative compliment to the glory and omnipo tence of Viṣṇu the defeat and decline of Indra'. For further informations of the same, see H.H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Purāṇa*. P. 66, note 8 ; J. Gonda, 'A note on Indra in Puranic Literature', *Purāṇa*, Vol, IX, No. 2 July 1967. P. 254f; Sk. P. 1, 1, 9, 3f states that due to the misbehaviour of Indra towards Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of gods, he had to lose his *trailokya* / *śrī*.

approached Viṣṇu, who was pleased with their praises and prayers and advised them to churn the milky Ocean with the help of demons to recover Lakṣmī as well as the amṛta (Vi. 25-26a, 27, 36-37, 34-35, 37b-39; Pd. 226-26 and Bd. 4, 9, 33f ; 45-47).

When the churning continued by the gods and demons, the following objects arose—1. Surabhī, the cow, 2, Vāruṇi, 3. Pārijāta tree, 4. Apsarasas, the nymphs of heaven, 5. Śitāṃśu, the cool-rayed moon, 6. the poison, which the Nāgas took possession of, 7-8. Dhanvantarī, robed in white garment and holding the Kamaṇḍalu containing amṛta, 9. last of all entities rose goddess Śrī out of the milky ocean on a full blown lotus with a lotus in her hand; she was radiant with beauty and brilliance. The sages enraptured by her presence prayed her with Śrī Sūkta. Viśvavasu and other Gandharvas sang in her presence; Ghṛtacī and other calestial nymphs danced before her. The Ganges and other holy streams attended her for her bath; the elephants of the quarters took up the waters in the vases of gold and poured them over the goddess. The ocean of milk in person presented her with a garland of hever-fading lotus; Viśvakarmā the artist of the gods decorated her body with neavenly ornaments. Thus she was bathed, adorned and decorated and cast herself upon the breast of Hari. (Vi. 1, 9, 100-105a; Pd. 5, 4, 58b-63).

The redactor of Padma Purāṇa (S) 5, 4, 64-69— while trying to stress the role of Primary Brahmā diverts from the main source thus—while the goddess was duly bathed and dressed Indra and other gods, Vidyādharas, Mahoragas, Dānavas, Daityas, Rākṣasas and Gūhyakas wanted to possess her; but Brahmā interfered and prevailed upon Viṣṇu to accept Śrī as his consort in view of his self-less service towards the gods and thereby he debarred all from getting her. Brahmā also asked Śrī to accept Viṣṇu as her consort. When Śrī went to Viṣṇu, she also entreated him not to forsake her under any circumstances.

When goddess Śrī adorned Viṣṇu and cast her glance on the gods, they were in the state of highest *nirvṛtti,* but the Daityas headed by Vipracitti were worried over Viṣṇu's acceptance of Śrī and snatched away the vassel of amṛta from Dhanvantarī. Viṣṇu through his *māyā* assumed the form of a female and infatuated the Daityas who handed it over to her and ultimately the gods could enjoy the amṛta.

But in addition to this, Viṣṇu Purāṇa adds a long hymn of praise which Indra addressed to Śrī (1,9,117-133) in order to emphasise her importance. When Śrī was moved by the praises and prayers of Indra, he asked for two boons—the first wish of Indra was that Śrī will not deprive of her presence from the three worlds and secondly Śrī will not turn away from those who shall repeat the hymn which he addressed her (Vs. 136-137). These two requests formulated by Indra and accepted by Śrī are in fact the recognition of Śrī's superiority over others and Indra may be considered to have inaugurated her cult. In addition to that Śrī also assured to remain as the constant companion of Viṣṇu in his different *avatāras*.

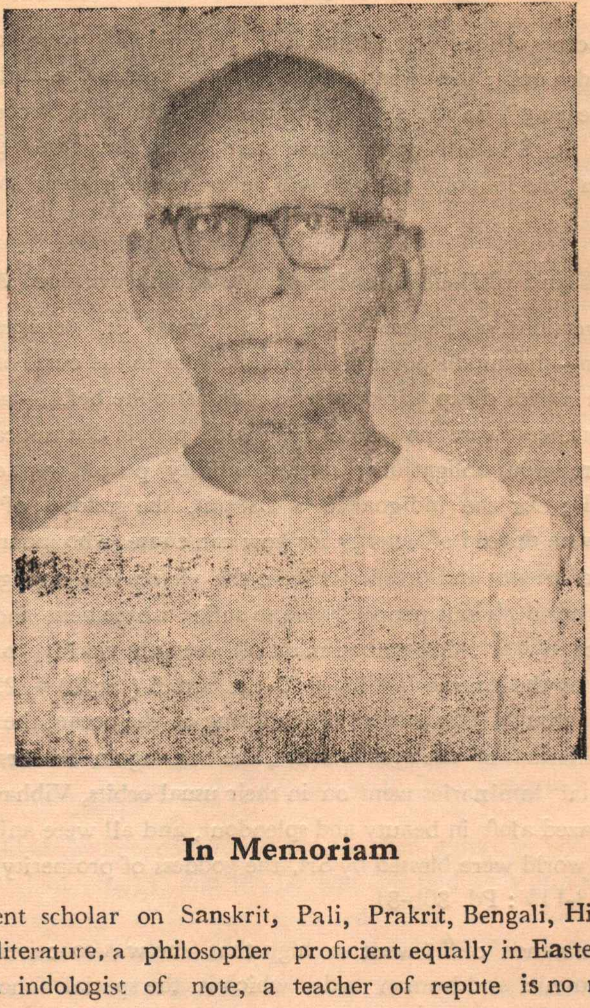
The redactors of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1,9,146-147) were not satisfied with the praise of Indra only; they went even a little further and added a *śravaṇa phala* (the result of hearing) to this section : those who hear this account of the birth of Śrī or recite it, Śrī shall never leave their house for three generations and goddess Alakṣmī, the fountain of strife will never reside in their houses (Vs. 146-147).

The Religious and philosophical contents of the version. A. Pd-Vi :

In the versions of Padma-Viṣṇu of the myth Śrī occupies the most important position—the middle point of attraction. Due to the curse or Durvāsā when Śrī of the three worlds disappeared, a serious catastrophe befell—no sacrifices were performed; penances were no more practised; people did not care for 'Charity' and moral or religious obligations; due to cupidity people were devoid of steadiness or fortitude; for the indignance of Lakṣmī, the goddess of prosperity and well-being all were devoid of energy for how can those who incur the displeasure of the goddess of plenty and prosperity have the virtues like strength and heroism etc; because of her disfavour people have to suffer abasement and defeat; due to the very absence of Śrī, the embodiment of strength vitality, prosperity, Devas were defeated by the Asuras (Vi. 1,9,27-32; Pd. 5 (Sṛṣṭi) 4, 23-25) but when Śrī reappeared through this process of churning of the ocean, the *dharma* auccumbed to the regulations of the cosmic order, the Sun again traversed in his usual path, the celestial luminaries went on in their usual orbits, Vibhavasu, the sacrificial fire was blazed aloft in beauty and splendour, and all were animated by devotion; when the world were blessed by Śrī, the goddess of prosperity, Indra became *Śrīmān* : Vi. 113-115 : Pd. 80b-81

The prominence of Śrī went so high that she was conceived to be the controller of the cosmic and human order which is the special function of *dharma*. The function of Viṣṇu as the protector of *dharma* in the old Visnuism (*Avatāravāda*) was then transferred to Śri, the companion of Viṣṇu; and she was given equal status with Viṣṇu.

[to be continued.



In Memoriam

An eminent scholar on Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Bengali, Hindi and English languages and literature, a philosopher proficient equally in Eastern and Western Philosophy, an indologist of note, a teacher of repute is no more ! Professor Satyamshu Mohan Mukhopadhyaya left this mortal world on November 4, 1976.

His father, Late Lalit Mohan Mukhopadhyaya, came from a highly respectable Brahmin family of village Vyasdanga, district Jessore, since in Bangladesh. Lalit Mohan had an admirable mastery over different branches of learning, and the young Satyamshu Mohan inherited from his father love for pursuit of knowledge. While a student of Banaras Hindu University for his first degree, he impressed his teachers of Philosophy, Sanskrit and English so much that all of them wanted Satyamshu Mohan to take up their subjects for the postgraduate course. However, he studied Philosophy for his first Master's degree which he got in 1922 with the topmost position. Later, in 1930, he did his M. A. again, and this time in Sanskrit. In the meanwhile, in 1923, he passed the L.T. examination of the Banaras Hindu University. As a post-graduate student, Satyamshu Mohan came into personal contact with the late lamented savant Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj (later Mahamahopadhyaya and Padmavibhushana), and studied with him Nyaya and Vaisheshika philosophy, as also the phonology of Pali. Later, he read Pali literature under Bhikkhu Anagarika Dhammapala. It may not be out of place here to mention that he received the Sadholal Scholarship from the Government Sanskrit College, Banaras.

In 1924 Satyamshu Mohan was appointed a lecturer in Udai Pratap College of Banaras. Next year he left it to join Ramjas College, Delhi. In 1928, he joined the Sanatan Dharma College of Kanpur. Satyamshu Mohan, however, felt an urge to return to Banaras.

In 1930, the opportunity came, and he left Kanpur to join the Government Sanskrit College as the Librarian of its Saraswati Bhawan Library. Whether as a teacher or as the Librarian, he was highly admired for his work by the authorities, as also by those with whom he came into contact. But, he could not stay long with the Library, since he had to accept the invitation of the Head Master of the Central Hindu School, Banaras. Lalit Mohan retired prematurely from the service of the School, and young Satyamshu Mohan had to fill up the vacancy as a teacher of Sanskrit, Bengali and English. He served the institution for six years with reputation, and in 1940 was transferred to the Teachers' Training College of the Banaras Hindu University as the teacher of Special English. He acted as the Principal of the College in 1951-52 when he showed equal efficiency as an administrator. He retired from service in 1960.

Satyamshu Mohan earned appreciation as a finished teacher in every institution he had the occasion to serve. He believed in direct method of teaching a matter which helped his taughts immensely. With him education was "a life-long *sadhana*, study, teaching and practice for freedom from bondages of all kinds, and expansion of the self in the truest sense of the term."

Satyamshu Mohan was a friend to his students. They used to flock to him with their problems academic or otherwise, and never they had to go back disappointed. The teacher helped them in every possible way. In fact, his residence was ever open to his students. Even long after his retirement from active service, researchers used to come to him, and he guided them in subjects like Sanskrit and Pali, Philosophy and Education.

He translated into English a Purana text, with profuse critical notes added to it. His *Saral Sanskrit Vyakarana,* written for High School and Intermediate courses, bears ample testimony to the originality of his treatment of the subject.

Satyamshu Mohan loved to read. In fact, he was a voracious reader of both ancient and modern works. To stydy at will, he built up a huge library of his own with titles running into thousands. The books are on various subjects, but the ones he liked the most are on a large number of works on Indian Philosophy. His library contains works on the six well-known systems of Indian Philosophy on Buddhist and Jaina philosophy, as also on Shaiva philosophy, on Pratyabhijna and Spanda philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, Vira Shaivism of Kerala, Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy of Bengal, on Vallabha, Madhva, Ramanuja, Shrikantha and other sects of Vedanta, as well as the texts and commentaries of Navya Nyaya of Bengal and Mithila Schools. His love for books was so alive that he not only studied them and remembered their contents, but remembered also the exact names of the titles, their authors or composers or editors, the particular editions, and even the years of their publication and price. From the profuse jottings in the margins of the books, it becomes evident how carefully he studied them.

Satyamshu Mohan was extremely fond of those who wanted to pursue study. Throughout his life he helped the needy amongst them with books and other reading materials. We shall refer to a very recent case. The students of Shri Shri Mata Anandamayee Kanyapeeth appear at various examinations conducted by the Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi. For reasons obvious, the Kanyapeeth library is not adequately rich to satisfy the needs of all its students. It so happened in 1976 that one student could not get two essential books even as late as a few days before her final examination. Satyamshu Mohan came to know about it, and decided to enrich the library of the institution. He purchased quite a number of original texts on philosophy along with their *bhashya* and *tika*, on the Tantras and Agamas, as also on English, Bengali, Pali and Hindi language and literature. During the last three months of his life, he himself went to the book-shops, selected the books himself, and got them catalogued under his own supervision, and donated a big collection to the Kanyapeeth library.

Satyamshu Mohan was a real *Brahmana* in the truest sense of the term. He. was the Brahmanical culture personified, and was an embodiment of purity and piety. Very strictly he adhered to the directives of the Hindu scriptures, and as a true brahmin, never took even a drop of water without repeating the *Gayatri-mantras* and performing the daily sandhya and puja, even while suffering from acute physical ailments. He was a man of principle, and never yielded to any pressure for personal favour or material gain. Boldly he used to face every opposition for causes noble and ideal. At the same time, he had in him an extremely soft and affectionate heart, a fact which would remind one of the immemorable words of Bhavabhuti : *vajradapi Kathorani, mriduni kusumadapi.* In pursuit of spiritualism, he was fairly advanced. During the last four or five years of his life, mostly he kept himself occupied with *smarana* and *manana.* During this period he made the *parayanas* of the *Shrimadbhagavata* with its twelve *tikas* for four times, of the *Mahabharata* again for four times, twice of the *Valmikiya Ramayana*, and used to celebrate it at the end of each *parayana.*

For the last six months of his life, Satyamshu Mohan was keeping rather indifferent health. But, being a man of strong will-force, as also possessing a temperament to adjust and tolerate, he never complained of his ailments, lest his own people, friends and admirers get worried about him. He withstood quietly the physical agonies, maintained a cheerful mood, and attended to his regular and normal duties. In fact after the demise of his *Guru* Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj, he paid tribute to his mentor over the radio and people took him to be quite fit in health.

Satyamshu Mohan used to regard truth with respect, and adhered to it religiously. Some two months and a half before he passed away, he fell seriously ill. His revered friend Shrimat Swami Narayananada Tirtha of Shri Shri Mata Anandamayee Ashrama came to see him. While going back the Swamiji assured him of a quick recovery, and asked him to pay a visit to the *Ashrama* at his earliest convenience. Satyamshu Mohan promised to do so, and on November 2 on the day of Prabodhini ekadashi, he went there and met his respected friend and some other Ashramites, and stayed there for some two hours. The very same night he had a sudden attack of severe breathing difficulty which, however, was brought under control through immediate medical attendance. Next day he felt much better, and was advised complete rest for full 48 hours. He himself, however, showed no signs of trouble, and in fact talked in the normal way to the members of his family as also with the visitors, and even advised some of them in their personal affairs.

At last came the fateful day, November 4, 1976. At 2.50 that afternoon his respiratory trouble started again, and while in full consciousnes, Satyamshu Mohan quietly passed away after 55 minutes at 3.45 p. m. at his residence at Shivala, Varanasi.

Thus came the end of a noble soul, a saintly gentleman, a man of morals and principles, a speaker of truth and adherer to it, a scholar, a teacher, a lover of the community of students. The lamp that shed forth lustre of knowledge for more than five decades at last became transported to heaven to illumine and inspire, humanity at large, from there ! Satyamshu Mohan has left this mortal frame. May his soul rest in eternal peace !

Bhaktisudha Mukhopadhyaya
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

Book Review

THE ETHICS OF DEVATMA by *Satyavan P. Kanal*, published by
Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi-110055
pp. xiv-350 Rs. 40/-

The present volume under review is an extension of Professor S. P. Kanal's the other two books, 'An Introduction to Devadharma' and 'Naturalism in Modern Indian Philosophy' which I had the fortune to review in the esteemed Vishvesvaranand Indological Journal, Punjab University in 1968 Vol. V. Pt. II. In the two books I reviewed there are interesting treatises making out a strong case for a science oriented religion almost on the lines of Confucius in China. The founder of this thought Devadharma is Sheo Narayan Agnihotri also known as Devatma born in 1830, who advocated a religion in harmony with facts and the laws of Nature and based on the evolution and dissolution of life-force or soul. In the present book Prof. S. P. Kanal makes out a strong case for an altruistic ethical philosophy. It is naturalistic, dialectical, scientific, evolutionary, optimistic and responsive. Its goal is a life of service in which "LOW HATES" and "LOW LOVES" are held to minimum while the individual tries in "HIGH LOVES" to remove evil in life wherever he may find it. But Devatma's is not a theistic ethics, it is naturalistic. Prof. S. P. Kanal depicts forcefully the unique mission of Devatma which entailed the surrender by the latter of his physical and mental powers and the necessity to face the trials and tribulations, calumnies and shafts of irony and contempt. Devatma flatly rejected "A PRIORI" reasoning and traditional methods of philosophy. He explains "The cannons of scientific method of investigation, which were essential in all the scientific study and research, acquired complete domination on my heart. The principles of experimental investigation, together with universal principles of logic had possessed my heart so completely that it became impossible for me to accept anything solely on the basis of intuition or speculation." As a result he evolved a unique society called Devasamaj, which has a large following.

Inspite of the objections which an orthodox thinker might raise like for instance the rejection of tradition, life after death and transcience of physical phenomena, we should be grateful to Prof. S. P. Kanal to have brought into lime light a neglected philosopher Devatma who propounded a new way of life and view of life, with due recognition he deserved. But whether or not one can agree with Devatma on all points, this volume should have marked influence on future Indian students of Philosophy in years to come. The book as a whole is a fine introduction to the study of Ethics and I am sure that it will have wide usage.

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ASSERTION AND FACT—The Categories of Self-conscious Thinking

by Prof. Jehangir N. Chubb Published by Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay
1977 pp. ix-228 Rs. 60/-

The book under review is the outcome of the author's intense and devoted critical study under the UGC scheme for the utilization of the teaching/research experience of distinguished teachers from 1965 to 1969 and dedicated with gratitude to renowned philosophers Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya and Gilbert Ryle. Prof. J. N. Chubb represents in his book a critique of a family of concepts discussed in recent philosophy of language and in recent ontology, primarily as they have developed in the analytic tradition of Great Britain by A. J. Ayer, G. E. Moore, P. F. Strawson, Bertrand Russell, L. Wittgenstein etc., concentrating on major twentieth century philosophical and epistemological problems. The basis of the critique is the author's own view regarding the nature and interrelation of language and reality. The main thesis of his book in the words of the author is "that epistemic conditions provide the indispensible context for the analysis of" what he has called "the categories of self-conscious thinking". (see preface) Thus Prof. Chubb's thinking in his book is in the field of Epistemology cum Philosophy.

The author deals in this book with the central concepts of the logical value of a linguistic expression, the epistemic gap between what is said and what IS, and of the assertion which, when true, closes the gap. The positive account, though brief and austere, is clear and displays critical force; it succeeds in loosening up deadlocks and hardened problems.

Prof. Chubb's contention is that in epistemology one should avoid the error of formalisation, and this error consists in a ruthless separation of abstract form from both content and relevant context, which distorts our understanding of thinking as it actually occurs......Abstraction of form from content is justified when we are concerned with formal inferences and with discovering the implications of what is asserted. The relevant context, however, is not determined by reference to the time, the place and the identity of the speaker, though these factors may be there and may complicate the analysis, but by the epistemic conditions of the use of phrase and sentences. So in the author's opinion that Epistemology is not concerned with the question of determining what is or is not the case; nor is it concerned with analysis of linguistic expressions in total abstraction from the question of what is or is not the case. His is not a purely semantic inquiry but to determine the ontological status of the intentional objects of these expressions *as so defined.*

The book deals with some of the special problems of contemporary epistemology and philosophy and avoids none of the generally significant ones It meets the opponents fairly and at their strongest. The analysis of the Chapters "Knowledge and Belief ", "Truth and Assertion", "Error and Meaning" are excellant and these problems are well known to persons familiar with contemporary philosophy and most of them have exerted influence of one sort or another in the analytic tradition of to-day.

This is not a book for a few leisure hours. It requires a concentrated study with a fair knowledge of recent developments in philosophy and epistemology, but is in that case more rewarding. The style is so clear and technicalities so carefully explained that the reading of the book is an intellectual pleasure. In my opinion the author ought to have made extensive references to the unrivalled importance of Prof. H.H. Price's works in the history of analytical thought. The reviewer deeply regrets to know this inadequate reference to Prof. H.H. Price from this volume especially because it is most important that the writings of the most stimulating living philosopher of our age should have the widest possible dissemination. (his book "Belief" "Thinking and Experience" etc.,)

The demerits of the book are the excessive price which limits its circulation to those scholars who might find some special interest in purchasing and lacks bibliography.

This new book as a whole is one of the major philosophical works in this century.

Prof. K. S. Ramakrishna Rao

SPLENDOUR IN THE CAVE *by Shyamananda Banerjee* Published by S. Banerjee. Rs. 15.00

We live to-day in a world of 'angst' and alienation, we bear our little loads of joy and sorrow, in an atmosphere charged with hate and spite, passion and prejudice, frustration and failure and when the allotted span expires, are swept away in the whirling eddy of death. Any reference to savants, seers, sages and saviours produce almost an allergic reaction in many of us, particularly of the younger generation, living in an area of darkness and discordance, disbelief and dismay and leading to defeat and disaster. The atheist, the agnostic, the sceptic in us raise their hooded fangs. In the name of science and technology Life becomes non-planned and statistics-ridden and is bogged down in a biological environment. It is not the Within, but the Without that counts and the Saga of an illuminated life is held in ridicule as a fancy or fantasy or at best a muddled mystic view of life.

Yet for thousands of years from our Vedic forbears to to-day's Shri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Raman Maharshi, Rishi Balanandaji Maharaj, Maharshi Brahmananda and a host of other devoted and dedicated souls in every nook and corner of the country from the Himalayan Snow-tops to the Narmada steppes, from Dwarka's sunswept sea-shores to Kamrup's Kamakhya hills, from Kurukshetra to Kanyakumari, we find a grand panorama of continuing procession of these pathfinders, from age to age, from clime to clime, proclaiming and proving by their silent but resurgent radio-active waves that the call of the Ultimate is not only imaginatively or emotionally but existentially valid. Religion so called, is neither a mere ideology nor a psychosomatic rehash of a ritualistic chanting or attachment for a particular dogma, code or creed, though the process may be necessary for some at some particular stage, but in reality it is the quest that counts and its intensity. In this search a schezo-phrenic absurdity, a vain endeavour of a tired brain, or an imaginative mania of a poet or a philosopher, to posit a First Cause call this or It by whatever name you like. Is it not the fulfilment of a real passion of a God-mad Man who seeks in the words of a village Baul Singer "the Mate of his heart" whom he seeks within and not without (Ulat Jao). As examples are better than precepts, there can be no striking proofs than the visual images and life-portraits of the men by persons who are competent to testify.

Such one book is "Splendour in the Cave", well written well-chiselled and well-outlined and if I may say so, by one who is a "Adhikari" in more senses than one. He has the innate touch of poetry within him and every poet is a 'Sadhak' in embryo in his own right. A poet is also a seeker. He tries to express. He portrays. He feels. He is deeply immersed in the thought. He goes within from the surface to the core. He is the same author who gave us, only the other day, a penpicture of Ma Anandamoyee. Outwardly he is the scion of an upper middle class Bengali family who had absorbed western logic and letters and mastered its semantics and was in the upper strata of a comfortable job. Yet he is not a mere story teller for the sake of the same but a man of deep sense and sensibility. It is difficult to say 'nay' to his affirmative 'yeahs' because he describes things which he has seen. It is the personal testimony of a man of integrity-himself, an erudite scholar and an ardent seeker.

One may ask - where is the cave and what was the splendour he saw. The cave, metaphorically is the human being's heart where the process of being is ctransformed into becoming. As Toynbee says in one of his latest dialogues with a Japanese Savant that Man must choose. The seeds of disintegration are there as well as sources of strength. Physically, the cave represented here is one in the Santhal Parganas near Baidyanathdham a cave, dingy, dark, cribbed, cabined and confined, but here came a youth in rags, sat in meditation, and turned it into a av e o f splendour - Jyoti - of light and love. The modern physicists talk o particles being turned into energy and energy into particles. This is understandable in terms of time and space but what about the non-physical aspect of reality, impalpable and elusive - the spiritual force that has held each cultured society together inspite of the drain on its vitality.

Balananadji's life reads like a living romance. Fourteen chapters give ample evidence of this process of transformation from 'Jiva' to 'Siva', of Being and Becoming. From a challenging boyhood which in essence was a divine birth, the great call came and in the solemn solitude of silence, a soul evolved with the help of the Light of Narmada (Narmada Parikrama is always a thrilling experience and he received the blessing of his Master, Swami Brahmananda, the great saint of the Narmada region who had lived for 250 years and to whom Shri Aurobindo had made a pilgrimage, when in Baroda). The Soul unfolded and Faith struck root. The mother's anguish for his dear son crying for 'Pitambur' 'Pitambur' adds a poignant chapter of human drama to the story of this colourful personality. Does not the poet say - He prayeth best who loveth best. In the author's own words the lingering memory remained and here was an inexhaustible source of Light, Life and Love and a master of Yoga in all its esoteric exercises, which he has bequeathed to his successor - Shri Mohananandji Maharaj.

For us, ordinary men, a dip into this sacred fount is enough. What we require, is a faint spark to light a lamp in the life's dark chamber from the big sacrificial fire, to turn a legend into a symbol, The story of the great Yajna performed in 1905, which the writer saw performed there, reminds me of this metaphor. A worthy father's letters to a worthy son (I refer to Sri Pran Gopal Mukhopadhaya's epistles, to his son Sri Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhya and ably edited by the latter as 'Patraprasad' to which the writer refers) provide ample evidence of that super conscient stage in which the Rishi lived and had his being, in that rugged and radiant cave, of which there are personal witnesses even to-day. The Tapoban was really a 'Tapoban' and I am reminded of the article of the same name by Rabindranath, where he interpreted the great Indian tradition.

The book rightly deserves respectful reading by all concerned, believers and non-believers. It radiates confidence, joy and hope.

Its style, tempo and get up are excellent.

Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee
Calcutta University
Calcutta

Notes & Comments

Kankalitilla Water Tank

At Kankalitilla in Mathura a water tank 8. 10 X 8. 10 metre square with a depth of 3.96 metres, has been excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India. The tank belongs to Kushan period (lst to 3rd century A, D.) yet it is still in almost perfectly preserved condition. The reservoirs on the two sides of the tank must have been constructed to store water. The rains found on another side indicate that there were also a public bath-house and a 'gopath'.

From a survey of the constructive work it reveals that the materials used at that time were of superior quality and the workmanship, of advanced skill.

Some pieces of pottery, beads, seals and pieces of sculpture have also been found from the site.

All these throw light on the highly developed civilisattion of the Kushan era. The archaeological survey of India took about two years to excavate the tank. Steps are being taken to preserve it.

Seminer on 'Relevance on Sanskrit'

It is a happy augury that in the All India Seminer on the 'Relevance of Sanskrit' held on February 12-14 1977, two very important resolutions were passed to promote the cause of Sanskrit learning in India. The resolutions draw the attention of those who are sitting at the half of affairs in the Government of the country who-se initiatives and active interest only can further the cause and issue the status of Sanskrit to its right place. The approach is direct and with a clears cheme requesting the Government to—

1. Introduce Sanskrit from standard VI to XII and that the passing in the subject be obligatory and the marks obtained in Sanskrit be included in the total marks.

2. Increase of Financial and to Sanskrit journals and Research works.

Lovers of Indian Culture and Sanskrit as the original language of the Areans will certainly endorse to the above without any reasons.

It is needless to say that the Seminar was attended by emenent scholars from all over India. Pt. Saraswati Prasad Chaturvedi presided over the Seminar. Sri Paramananda Bhai Patel, Minister for Industry and Commerce of Madhya Pradesh inaugarated the seminar and emphasised the necessity of acquainting the world about the scientific achievements through the study of Sanskrit in ancient India. Besides the above Sri K. Chowdhury, the Vice Chanceller of Jabalpur University, Dr. C. D. Sharma, Dr. Jani of MS University, Prof. S. A. Upadhyaya, Dr. Baldev Singh and others participated in the discussions.

Hindu Deities

Prof. A. L. Basham, one of the leading historians, delivered a lecture a few days ago on 'Gods of Modern Hinduism.' The speech was an interesting one because the professor had a good collection of about 200 Hindu deities and did his best to locate the origin of each of them and tried to explain in his own way the process of evolution of such dieties on a psychological basis.

He opined that according to Hindu conception of God, the Gods and Goddesses must be with a smiling countenance, very young and of a delicate physical structure. It is clear that the picture of Sri Krishna conceived of by the Hindus as ever young drew his attention. He dealt with Krishna Leela at length and spoke highly about the 'Bastra Haran' scene and its philosophical interpretation that salvation lay in complete surrender and detachment to all that is worldly. The clothes symbolize attachment or otherwise said the clothes stand for bashfulness.

Sri Krishna desired that the Gopis, the greatest of devotees should rid themselves of all obstacles or 'Mohas' even bashfulness in between themselves and the Lord. He rejected the theory that Sri Krishna denounced the practice of women's naked bathing and took an opportunity to teach them a lesson with a social bearing. The Professor also dealtwith the stories relating to Sri Krishna's childhood, such as sterling of Butter and sharing the same with his friends as also 'Kaliya Daman' and its significance.

It is note-worthy that Santoshi ma, the most favourite goddess of today, and Shram Devi, depicted in painting with factories and tractors and even rockets in her hand, did not escape his notice.

While appreciating his honest endeavour to understand the religious ferver that ran through the veins of Hindus we have to say that Indian Mythology is so vast and the interpretations are so varied that he will have to be more cautious in arriving at inner meanings. For instance he has identified a horse headed Kinnara as Narada in a painting of Vishnu on Adishesha.

Temple of Gaṇapati in New York

The newly constructed temple of Ganapati in the subarb of New York city in an attraction not only for the Indians but also for others who visit New York. Sri Tirumalai Devasthanam alone paid 16 lakhs of rupees for the construction of the building. In addition to that a large amount was collected as donation from the immigrants of Indian origin, in America. Andhra Pradesh Government also extended their helping hand in the matter. The temple is disigned in the South Indian style and Lord Gaṇapati is the main deity there. The images of Venkateswar, Parvati and the other important duties, are also there.

On 4th July the first Pujas ceremony has been performed in great pomp and grandeour. A team of well versed purohits air dashed to New York to perform the first Puja.

It is indeed a great achievement that shrine like this in a far off country was established which will help maintains our cultural link with the people of Indian origin there.

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